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# BRASS HATS

# and BELL-BOTTOMED

# TROUSERS

WILLIAM GUY CARR

*has also written*

---

BY GUESS AND BY GOD

HELL'S ANGELS OF THE DEEP

HIGH AND DRY

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A HARWICH DESTROYER FLOTILLA RETURNING INTO HARBOUR

WILLIAM GUY CARR

# BRASS HATS AND BELL-BOTTOMED TROUSERS

UNFORGETTABLE AND SPLENDID FEATS OF THE HARWICH PATROL

*Being Volume Two of*
*"By Guess and by God"*

HUTCHINSON & CO.
(*Publishers*), LTD.
LONDON

D581 .C34

PRINTED IN
GREAT BRITAIN,
AT THE ANCHOR
PRESS, TIPTREE,
:: ESSEX ::

1939

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# INTRODUCTION

THIS BOOK IS NOT intended to be a history. I am simply trying to do for the men who served so gloriously with the Harwich Naval Force what I did in *By Guess and By God* for the crews which served in submarines. Their deeds should be recorded and preserved for posterity. I am not in the least concerned in recording the technicalities of naval warfare and statistical data, as I frankly admit I know very little about such things. The Lords of the Admiralty, the Admirals, Commodores, and Captains can compile statistics which prove this, or disprove that, and which data is "Greek" to all except those who write it and study such matters.

I have discussed the incidents described in the pages of this book with all kinds of ranks and ratings, ranging from Commodore (now Admiral of the Fleet) Reginald Tyrwhitt down to the most humble stoker. I made contacts with hundreds of men. I arranged personal interviews with as many as possible, and wrote to others in order to obtain their impressions and reactions.

Many men were good enough to send me letters, photographs, and other material from which I could write a composite story and arrange the events in chronological order. These details, together with those I gathered while serving out of Harwich and Blyth in submarines, rounded out the story. It has taken nearly twenty years to build up the material. I am satisfied that the incidents referred to in this book actually happened, because I have taken the trouble to check one man's story against another. For instance : it seems an extraordinary thing that one part of a destroyer's crew (the part not actually engaged at action stations) should sit on a rail and sing, "Get out and

get under . . . get out and get under . . . your bloomin' old automobile", particularly when one considers the fact that their destroyer was literally being driven through solid walls of waterspouts caused by the fall of curtains of enemy shells, and that their one hope of escaping death was that their officers on the bridge would continue to guess right, and put the helm over so as to miss by mere feet the spot where the next salvo of shells would fall, but I checked the truth of this epic from three different sources. I obtained the original story from Stoker P.O. Leach, who served in the *Hind* during the Battle of the Bight ; I had it confirmed by Commander C. L. A. Woollard, who served in the *Undaunted* and heard the story from the Captain of the *Hind*, and then again I heard the story repeated at a gathering of naval veterans in Toronto when two "Old Ships" got together and discussed the incidents over a few glasses of beer.

I am much indebted to all those officers and men who co-operated with such wonderful results, and my only regret is that I feel I lack the ability to do justice to such a subject, for it was the officers and men who served in the Harwich "Striking Force" that exemplified the "Spirit of Nelson" ; it was these men who went into everything they were asked to do "Hell bent for election".

As the first Vice-President and acting President of the Royal Naval Association and the Naval Club of Toronto, I had the opportunity of meeting in a most pleasant manner over eight hundred ex-naval men who attended the first Canadian Corps Reunion, and I had the honour of being officer commanding the guard of honour which welcomed Admiral Tyrwhitt when he visited Toronto on that memorable occasion.

Another reason for writing this book is this. The world is rapidly forgetting the realities of the last war, and seemingly heading for another. Frankly speaking, we (the British nation) were caught with our pants down when the last war broke out, as will be shown in the pages of this book. We lacked ships, munitions, and equipment. We

lacked properly protected and defended harbours; we didn't have sufficient reserves of men, food, and fuel. It would be too bad to make the same mistake again, and yet we threw away the predominant naval supremacy we earned during the war because of the rantings and ravings of a bunch of pacifists.

The result is we are once more engaged in another armament race on a more gigantic scale than ever. I don't want war. I don't want my children to be cannon-fodder, but just as long as human nature is what it is there will be wars, and in every case the wars will be forced on the weaker nations by the stronger.

I have included in Chapter Ten the official despatches as included in the *London Gazette*, which cover the operations recorded in Part One of this book, because, while they give very little information as to what actually happened at the time, they do confirm in a great many instances the stories recorded in the pages of this book. The reader will probably note that many of the officers and men I describe and refer to are mentioned in these official despatches, and in many cases they are shown to have received decorations for their courage, coolness, and outstanding devotion to duty.

Take, for instance, the story I publish about the *Meteor* during the Dogger Bank action in Chapter Eleven. The official despatches contain the names of several of the officers and men I mention, but they only record the fact that so-and-so received a certain decoration and that he served aboard say H.M.S. *Meteor*. They do not tell, as a general rule, why he received the honour.

In the same chapter we find that men of both H.M.S. *Arethusa* and H.M.S. *Meteor* claim the distinction of firing the torpedo which settled the fate of the German cruiser *Blücher*. Both ships were in at the death, as the saying is, and it is quite possible that both ships fired torpedoes which hit the crippled vessel.

I have arranged the book in chronological order in two parts. Part One deals with the most interesting events which occurred at sea from the outbreak of war, August 4th,

1914, to December 31st, 1914. Part Two takes the reader along to June 1st, 1916, and ends with the Battle of Jutland.

In the beginning of the book I have compiled a Glossary of Naval Terms and Phrases, which I hope will be found interesting to the readers whose acquaintance with the sea consists of going down to the seashore for a holiday.

At the end of the book is an Index, in which I have listed alphabetically the names of all men, ships, and places referred to, and against the name I have given the page and a brief account of the particular incident with which it is connected.

I say this to the generation of young Britishers which has grown up to manhood since the war ended. I am convinced that the present generation is just as good as any in the past, and I hope that by recording the deeds of their fathers, who served the Empire so nobly and well in the "hard-lying" ships of the Royal Navy, they will be inspired to follow in their footsteps if ever it is necessary to defend our heritage against an aggressor nation.

My reason for writing *By Guess and By God* and *Brass Hats and Bell-Bottomed Trousers* (which is Volume II of the same book) is the fact that when I read naval history at school I found it was only about what the "Brass Hats" did, and I thought often that the story would have been far more interesting had I known what the powder-monkeys, the able seamen, and the petty officers had done also.

If I may be permitted to voice my own personal opinions in this introduction, I would simply like to say to the reader that I believe the British Empire, if solidly united, can be the greatest single power to maintain peace and stability in the world, and as such it is well worth fighting for, but I also contend that, having fought one war to end war, if we are forced into another war it must be clearly understood by all nations concerned that they stand to lose their nationality in case of defeat.

Last time the Allies took the dirt. For three and a half years they fought with their noses ground deep in the mud. They lost hundreds of thousands of men because they were

not properly trained or equipped. We survived only at sea because of the splendid leadership of our admirals and the wonderful spirit of our men, and yet when at the end the tide turned and our armies had their enemies on the run, and the Navy had unquestioned control of the seas once more, then we allowed our enemies to quit the moment they found the going unpleasant and cried "Kamerad !"

Our foolish, if well-intentioned, post-war politicians, backed by pacifists, agreed to "Forgive and forget" ; to "Let bygones be bygones". My advice to such is to stay home and get on with their knitting, and leave the well-being and security of the Empire in the hands of the men and the sons of the men who built it.

If we are ever forced into another war we must make it clearly understood that it will be a war to the finish ; we must leave no doubt in the minds of aggressor nations that if they hope to live by war they must surely die by war if they lose again. There can be no weakness or foolish sentimentality enter into negotiations when the war finishes. The nations which lose will be nations no longer ; their countries will belong to the victors. I am convinced that should we have lost the last war that would have been the fate of the British Empire, and if we lose the next war it will still be our fate. Then why in Heaven's name do we try to be friendly with nations which only seek our destruction, and are so unprincipled that they continue to plot our ultimate destruction even under the guise of post-war friendship and gratitude ?

W. G. C.

*The Maples,*
*Richmond Hill,*
*Ontario.*

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THE BRITISH NAVY

### "The Harwich Striking Force"

| | |
|---|---|
| "A.B." | An able-bodied seaman. |
| "Aft"<br>"Abaft" | The section of the ship between the main-mast and stern.<br>"Go aft" means "Go to the stern of the ship".<br>"Abaft" means "behind". |
| "Alleyway" | Passageway or corridor aboard ships." |
| "All hands on deck" | Everybody for duty, including watch below. |
| "Avast heaving, there" | "Stop pulling my leg. Tell the truth !" |
| "Back water" | To retreat. To withdraw something you have already said. To apologize. |
| "Beef trip" | Special patrol to escort food ships. |
| "Binder" | A final "wet" in a drinking party. |
| "Binge" | A party in which alcohol figures freely. |
| "Bloke, The" | The Commander of a ship. |
| "Blotto" | "Pie-eyed" . . . drunk, but happy. |
| "Bottoms up" | To drain one's glass after each toast. |
| "Brass hat" | Any officer above the rank of Lieutenant-Commander. |
| "Captain of the heads" | Man who is responsible for the cleaning of the men's lavatories. |
| "Carry lots of ballast" | Able to carry his liquor. Will drink a lot and not show the effects. |
| "Chips" | The ship's carpenter. |
| "Companionway" | Stairway or sloping ladder with rail. |
| "Deck" | Floor. |
| "Deck head" | Ceiling. |
| "Down below" | Downstairs—below decks. |
| "E.R.A." | Engine-room Artificer. (Warrant-officer rank.) |

| | |
|---|---|
| "Fall in" | Line up with your division on deck. |
| "Fall in the drink" | Getting a wetting by falling overboard. |
| "Flatfoot" | A sailor. |
| "For'ard" | The forepart of a ship. |
| "Fender" | Bulky objects made of cork and rope which are put over the side of a ship to prevent scraping when coming alongside other ships, or alongside a wharf. |
| "Gib" | Nose. "I don't like the cut of your gib" means "I don't like you . . . I don't like your attitude." |
| "Galley" | The ship's kitchen. |
| "Gangway" | Opening or doorway. |
| "Gangway, there !" | "Make way—get out of my way." |
| "Glory-hole" | The stokehold. Firemen's quarters. |
| "Grog" | Rum. |
| "Half shot" | Half drunk. |
| "Happy ships" | Ships where officers and men get along well. |
| "Hard tack" | Sea biscuits. |
| "Harriet Lane" | Tinned meats. |
| "Heads" | Toilets aboard ship. |
| "Heave to" | "Stop—wait for me." |
| "Hard to navigate" | Lost. Uncertain where you are going. |
| "Hoist the Jolly Roger" | Defy discipline and authority. |
| "Jaunty" | A ship's policeman. |
| "Jimmy-the-one" | The First Lieutenant of a ship. |
| "Knots" | The speed of a ship in nautical miles per hour. |
| "L.T.O." | Leading Torpedoman. |
| "Lee side" | Side of ship protected from wind and weather. |
| "Leather-neck" | A member of the Royal Marines. |
| "Lost the number of his mess" | Got killed, or died. |
| "Lash up and stow" | "Get up and stow your hammocks." |
| "Making heavy weather" | Staggering along. Crippled. |
| "Matelot" | Sailor, or seaman. |

| | |
|---|---|
| "My little cork fender" | Sailor's term of endearment for his wife. |
| "Nelson's blood" | Rum. |
| "O.S." | Ordinary seaman. |
| "O.O.W." | Officer of the watch. |
| "Old ships" | Men who have served together on the same ships in previous commissions. |
| "On the wrong tack" | Heading in the wrong direction. Wrong in an argument. |
| "Porthole" | Window or opening in ship's side. |
| "Portside" | Left-hand side of a ship. |
| "Put my hand across your bow" | A threat to strike a person. |
| "Prick of tobacco" | Tobacco made aboard ship by hand out of leaf tobacco, molasses, and rum, rolled in canvas and bound with marline. |
| "Rise and shine" | Get up out of bed smartly. |
| "Run in with the owner" | To get into trouble with the Captain. |
| "S.N.O." | Senior Naval Officer. |
| "Salt horse" | Any kind of meat pickled in brine. |
| "Sawbones" | The ship's surgeon or doctor. |
| "Shiver me timbers" | Expression of intense surprise or amazement. |
| "Show a leg, there" | "Get out of your hammock. Get out of bed." |
| "Skilly" | A stew made of a little of everything. |
| "Skipper" | The Captain. |
| "Sky Pilot" | The parson or priest aboard ship. |
| "Sling the hash" | Pass the food. |
| "Slip your cable" | Die, or be killed. |
| "Snotty" | A midshipman. |
| "Spit and polish" | Clean up. To make oneself look smart. |
| "Splice the mainbrace" | Take a drink. To issue rum other than at regular time. "Come, let's splice the mainbrace" means, "Come, let us have a drink". |
| "Spit kid" | Large tub used as a spittoon to keep decks clean. |

| | |
|---|---|
| "Starboard" | Right-hand side of a ship. |
| "Stow your gib" | "Keep quiet. Stop giving impudence." |
| "Swill" | Soup. |
| "Steering a heavy course" | Making one's way along with difficulty. |
| "Sick-bay" | Ship's hospital. |
| "Sea rig" | Old clothes and duffle coats, woollen stockings and sea-boots. |
| "Take a reef in your top sails" | "Quieten down. Steady up." |
| "The brig" | The prison or cells. |
| "Take a person in tow" | A sailor's expression for picking up a girl he fancies. |
| "The Old Man" | The Captain. |
| "The Owner" | Also the Captain. |
| "The Pilot" | The navigating officer. |
| "The mess deck" | Crew's quarters. |
| "The wardroom mess" | Officers' quarters. |
| "The gunroom mess" | Junior officers' quarters. |
| "The drink" | The ocean. |
| "Three sheets in the wind" | Drunk. |
| "Turn in" | Go to sleep. Go to bed. |
| "To strike soundings" | To strike it lucky. |
| "To give a person a wide berth" | To keep clear of them. |
| "To steer clear of" | To avoid. |
| "To get spliced" | To get married. |
| "To foul one's bottom" | To get in wrong with the police or authorities. |
| "To take in the slack of your pants" | To turn over a new leaf. |
| "To show a clean pair of heels" | To run away from, and outdistance, a ship or person. |
| "To slip your cable" | To die or be killed. |
| "To hot-stuff" | To purloin or steal anything. To take without permission. |
| "Under below" | Get out of the way—jump—a word of warning. |

# PART ONE

## CHAPTER ONE

### *War Clouds Gather*

WAR CLOUDS GATHER, but shove-ha'penny is the burning question of the evening.

Line upon line of sleek grey warships dragged at their moorings like impatient hounds waiting to be freed from their leashes. Spithead stood out but indistinctly in the haze of the July heat. The whole atmosphere was charged like a magazine. In the Near East bitter feelings were rife. The angry murmurings of disgruntled peoples throughout the world reached one like the rumble of distant thunder. A test mobilization of the Royal Naval Reserves was just over. The King had reviewed his Fleet. The British lion had roared its warning.

In the wardroom of a certain dreadnought three officers discussed the situation.

"I tell you, gentlemen, the situation is serious. King Edward may deservedly go down in history as 'Edward the Peacemaker', but his efforts in preserving the peace of Europe will not amount to a row of beans. It is just like a dry season that temporarily retards a crop. But the fruit must ripen, and when the fruit is ripe it falls. When the time is ripe war will be declared. Just mark my words . . . the day isn't very far distant." Thus spoke one of the officers, a commander.

"I think you are wrong," replied one of his companions who was Fleet Paymaster. "I believe the efforts of His Late Majesty had real value and his influence and opinions carried great weight. My opinion is that the nations of the earth are learning to realize the futility of war. Sane reasoning and straightforward arguments should be capable of settling the most complicated international questions."

"If war is so remote, why then do we build so many dreadnoughts? What reason gave birth to the brainwave which resulted in the new M-class destroyers? What are we going to do with our submarines? The whole world talks peace and prepares for war. Personally, I hope Sir Edward Grey sticks to his guns and lets the rest of Europe know that we Britishers are not altogether a nation of shopkeepers," retorted the Commander. "Personally, I think a jolly good scrap would do us all a lot of good. Inactivity breeds a sluggish liver. We cannot expect the old bulldog to retain his grip if we never give him a bone to chew on. The spirit and efficiency of the Navy will be 'all shot' if we remain in harbour all our lives. What we need is experience and exercise."

"Well . . . whatever happens, there's nothing much *we* can do about it, except . . . perhaps . . . do our duty," said the young gunnery officer.

The junior raised his glass . . . "Let's eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we . . ."

The three officers drained their glasses. One gave a silent toast to Peace, the other to War. The third was thinking of the woman he was about to marry.

"Well, let's talk about something cheerful. We are to proceed to our Home ports and give leave," said the Commander, rising from his chair.

. . . . .

In the mess deck of the destroyer *Hind* some stokers also discussed the situation.

"War me blooming heye. Hit's the old cry. Wolf . . . Wolf . . . What about that Agadir question? Up pops the mailed fist, but it don't amount to nothing. We ain't men-o'-war any more, we're training to be ruddy nursemaids in a kindergarten. After we retire we'll be wheeling babies in the park," said Nobby Clark disgustedly.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! 'Ear 'im rave. See the wild man gnash 'is teeth. How many babies did yer eat for breakfast this morning, Nobby?" inquired one of his messmates.

"If you don't shut up I'll bloody-well eat you," threatened Nobby, and added, "I've got to eat all I kill nowadays. Me private cemetery's all filled up."

This last sally brought forth a good-natured burst of laughter from his messmates.

"Lor' lumme, it 'ud seem funny knocking 'ell outa them squareheads. They never did nothing to any of us. I 'member when I was on the China station, nineteen-eleven, in the *Newcastle* . . . a bunch of German sailors helped our crowd clean up on some Yanks," remarked one of the mess.

"Yer damn' right," chimed in another, "an' I had the best time of me life when they opened the Kiel Canal. Strike me 'ansome if one German petty hofficer didn't introduce me to the nicest piece of skirt I've ever met in the whole of me bleeding life . . ."

"Now, now, Dusty. There yer go again. Always on about the women. It's all right to love 'em and leave 'em, but for cripe's sake stop talking about them. Shakespeare and Balzac 'as told about love and women better'n you'll ever hope to do," chided another seaman.

"But, talking about this 'ere ruddy war. I'll bet my 'tot' for a week against any man's here that we don't declare war during the rest of our commission," offered Nobby disgustedly.

"I'll take you on," said Dusty. "I'll bet we do. Can't you read the ruddy signs? Blimey, 'aven't you noticed old Jock McLeod? He's worried stiff. He'll have finished his twenty-two years next month. If there's a ruddy war breaks out he'll be kept on. Jock 'as saved every penny 'e ever earned. He's bought a pub and is just dyin' to bury his nose in the froth. I'll bet the first week as 'e gets ashore 'e'll only come up for air as of'en as a submarine."

His messmates laughed at Jock's expense. It was true, he was all ready to retire and buy his pub.

"Hi there, Cookie! Where in 'ell do we go from 'ere? Have you arst the Admiral yet?" yelled Dusty as he spotted the cook poke his nose in the mess.

"Harwich . . . and prepare for war," replied the slinger

of hash mysteriously. According to his own estimate he knew more about the policy of the Admiralty than the First Sea Lord himself, and he always reckoned to know the ship's position better than the navigator or the Captain when at sea.

"Ha ! Ha ! Ha ! If 'Tubby' has declared war, what are we going to do about it?" demanded Dusty Millar.

"Hey, 'Tubby'," yelled one of the men to the cook. "Will you please give us special leave so we can say good-bye to our sweethearts afore we go to the bloomin' war ?"

"I'd give yuh leave, only you'd be scared to go home," retorted the cook.

"What's 'e been doing, 'Tubby' ?" chorused the rest of the mess.

"Well, I don't exactly like to say. But they do say 'e wants to be careful, and not throw hany stones so they fall into an orphanage or over the poorhouse walls."

A roar of laughter met this last sally, and several of the men began to sing :

"Oh ! Sally Brown, I love your daughter.
Spent my money on Sally Brown".

. . . . .

Thus was the spirit of the Navy, both in wardroom and on the lower deck, the morning the ships of the Fleet hove up anchor to proceed to their respective home ports, intending to give the customary leave following the Fleet Review off Spithead.

Once at sea, however, commanding officers assumed an air of thoughtful responsibility. Each had received a confidential memorandum telling him to be prepared to take aboard extra supplies of ammunition and war stores.

On July 27th, 1914, all leave was unexpectedly cancelled and officers and men were ordered to return to their ships.

"Nobby", the stoker off the *Hind*, sat in a pub called the "Radnor". He had landed from his ship at Gosport and proceeded to Portsmouth by ferry. He was much more

concerned about the late arrival of his pal, a dockyard labourer, than he was about the prospects of war. He had challenged this landlubber friend of his to a game of shove-ha'penny, a game of great skill and much patronized by the men of the lower deck.

His mind was so deeply concerned over the disappointment caused by the non-arrival of his pal that he hardly looked up as the ferry boats passed right under the stern of Lord Nelson's old flagship, the *Victory*. War Lords and Admirals might be in deep consultation, politicians might be growing blear-eyed from want of sleep, crowns might totter and empires threaten to fall, but such matters pale into insignificance when a sailor has to study the finer points of the problems of shove-ha'penny.

"I'll beat the slippery son of a sea-cook . . . see if I don't !" growled the expert of the *Hind* with onion-tainted breath as he downed his pint of ale impatiently.

The door of the bar-parlour opened. The stoker looked up expectantly . . . then his face dropped. Before him stood a petty officer complete in gaiters, side-arms, and bandolier.

"Neck yer beer and get the hell aboard yer ship," ordered the new arrival shortly.

"What for ?" the stoker demanded.

"Go aboard an' find out. We're cleaning you fellows off the streets . . . pullin' 'em out of bed. Come on, get a move on," replied the P.O. of the patrol.

Through the open window came the shrill voice of a newsboy.

"Grave War News . . . Sir Edward Grey's Speech."

"I 'eard all that kind of stuff afore," retorted "Nobby". " 'Member when the fleet was in Cromarty and the German Navy was reported to be at sea ? They was 'sposed to 'ave us all bottled up in the Firth !"

"Sure thing," replied the petty officer.

"Well, it never came to nothing, and neither will this," argued the stoker, lifting his glass.

"You've got to go aboard, anyway," ordered the P.O.

"Sure . . . but what's the hurry ? 'Ere, have a drink,"

invited the champion shove-ha'penny player. "Drop in on yer way back and we'll go down to the ferry together."

The petty officer drained his glass and then gently but firmly helped his mate out of the public house.

As soon as he was free "Nobby" dug his hand in his pocket. He pulled out his money. Two halfcrowns, three shillings, a sixpence, and some coppers. A quick mental calculation figured out the change in glasses of beer. He turned down a side street, wended his way behind the Sailor's Home, and entered the "Old House at Home".

"Pint of 'arf 'an 'arf, please, miss," he ordered.

"Sorry, but we can't serve any more beer to men in uniform. They're cleaning the town," she informed him.

"Come on, miss . . . just one more," he coaxed. "I've got about 'arf a quid left and it 'ud be too bad to have it go to the bottom of the North Sea."

He had just buried his nose in the froth of his beer when in walked a "river rat". "Say, ain't you heard the news?" demanded the member of the harbour police.

"No . . . what news? I ain't 'eard no news," the stoker answered innocently.

"Yer ain't 'eard no news, eh! Well, I'm a telling of yer. The blooming Kaiser's thrown 'is head back and swelled out 'is chest until 'e's busted all the buttons off 'is blinkin' coat. 'E's sent what they calls an ultimatum to 'is cousin George telling 'im to pick 'em up and sew 'em on again. What yer goin' to do abart it?" demanded the limb of the law.

"Knock 'is blooming 'ead off," promptly replied the stoker, who was beginning to feel very warlike under the influence of his numerous beers.

"That's the stuff to give 'em!" cried the policeman heartedly . . . then advised, "Better 'urry back to yer ship. She'd likely lose the battle if she sailed without yer."

The stoker hitched up his pants and begged the trim little barmaid to kiss him good-bye. As he left, those who remained shouted, "Good luck, Jack . . . Give 'em 'ell. Bring us back some 'air outa the Kaiser's beard."

"Nobby" took another hitch at his pants and with a regular deep-sea roll made his way down to the ferry and crossed over to Gosport. He couldn't resist the temptation, however, to make another port of call and take aboard additional supplies . . . he headed into the "Isle of Wight" bar.

"Well, I'll be damned if it ain't old 'Growler' !" Thus he greeted another sailor who was leaning over the bar telling his woes to the pretty barmaid. "Growler" turned around and met "Nobby" with outstretched hand. They were "Old Ships". Everything else was forgotten. They settled down to talk over old times and to do some serious drinking.

"Just imagine . . . 'ere am I wif me twelve years completed next week and now there's a ruddy war on. Can yuh beat it ?" demanded "Growler", true to his nickname.

"Why worry, old sport ? The first seven years will be the worst, and then every third year after that," consoled his friend.

"Growler" was off H.M.S. *Prince of Wales*. The two had served together on H.M.S. *St. Vincent*, and had always been the best of pals.

"Drink up and let's 'ave a binder," said Nobby. "I've gotta get goin' . . ."

"What's yer 'urry, mate ? 'Ere's a couple of my friends comin' in. We gotta 'ave a drink with them." Saying which, "Growler" shouted to a couple of marines who had just entered, "Come over 'ere, boys, and make yerselves at 'ome."

The two marines gladly accepted the invitation . . . more "rounds" were ordered, and the merry party only broke up when the chucker-out announced, "Time . . . gentlemen . . . time."

"Nobby" was half-seas-over as he rolled none too steadily down to the jetty where the liberty boat had landed the men. All was quiet. No boat was in sight. Through his clouded brain flashed pictures of drastic punishment handed out to men absent without leave. This was a time of crisis . . . the situation was serious . . . his ship might sail . . . he didn't want to be left behind . . . she was a "happy" ship.

Stooping down, "Nobby" unlaced his boots, took them off, and, knotting the laces together, slung them across his shoulders. He stood for a moment undecided, then dived into the dark waters and breasted the strong tide. It was a hard, cruel swim, but he finally made the gangway of his ship and grabbed hold of the bottom, thoroughly exhausted. The watch helped haul him aboard.

"Nobby" had been reported "Absent" when the other liberty men returned, and consequently had been put in the Commander's report. He was charged with "Ignoring the recall, and breaking into the ship". The Commander heard the circumstances of how "the breaking in" was committed and "Nobby" was awarded "Ten days 10A".

The next morning H.M.S. *Hind* sailed for Harwich. The crew worked hard painting over all bright metalwork and covering the white bands on the funnels. This was preparing for war. Destroyers were intended for work at night; at least, that was the general opinion in those days.

Although they did not know it at the time, the crew of the *Hind* were soon to take part in the first daylight destroyer attack ever attempted against an enemy.

Life in the "Big Navy" is very different from that lived by the officers and men who serve in destroyers, light cruisers, and submarines. In the big ships there is a "job" for every man, and a man for every "job". In small ships it is very different. On watch a man might be a stoker. When in action he might be almost anything from ammunition carrier to captain of a gun. It all depends on the number of casualties suffered in the action. These men worked feverishly preparing their ship for war while steaming towards (what was at that time to them) their unknown destination. The world in general and the British public in particular wondered what had happened to the British Fleet. It seemed to have dissolved into the mists of the North Sea.

Only a few short days before the ships of the Royal Navy had been the centre of interest as they were massed for the great Spithead Review. Line upon line of them, every type

went to form the vastest array of fighting ships the world has ever known, and then one morning as the sun dispelled the mists of night all was changed. The great modern Armada had disappeared. Secretly, silently, they had dissolved into the unknown. Then again, like the turn in a conjuring trick, they appeared in various places. Some up north at Scapa Flow. Some in the Cromarty Firth ; others in the Firth of Forth.

At Harwich the light cruiser *Amethyst*, flagship of Commodore Reginald Tyrwhitt, led the Harwich Force, which consisted of the First and Third Destroyer Flotillas, the Eighth Submarine Flotilla under Commodore Roger Keyes, and the necessary depot ships and supply vessels.

The First Destroyer Flotilla consisted of the light cruiser *Fearless*, commanded by Captain W. F. Blunt, and twenty destroyers divided up into five divisions :

1st Division : *Acheron*, *Archer*, *Attack*, *Ariel*.
2nd Division : *Badger*, *Beaver*, *Hydra*, *Hind*.
3rd Division : *Ferret*, *Forrester*, *Defender*, *Druid*.
4th Division : *Hornet*, *Tigress*, *Sandfly*, *Jackal*.
5th Division : *Goshawk*, *Phoenix*, *Lizard*, *Lapwing*.

The Third Flotilla was made up of the light cruiser *Amphion*, commanded by Captain C. H. Fox, and the following destroyers :

1st Division : *Lance*, *Legion*, *Lennox*, *Loyal*.
2nd Division : *Lark*, *Landrail*, *Lydiard*, *Lookout*.
3rd Division : *Laforey*, *Lawford*, *Linnet*, *Louis*.
4th Division : *Laurel*, *Lysander*, *Laertes*, *Liberty*.
5th Division : *Llewellyn*, *Leonidas*, *Lucifer*.

From Parkeston Quay these ships looked like amphibian greyhounds, waiting ready and alert to be slipped to course their enemies the hares. They gave one the impression of concentrated power and speed. Their sharp bows and graceful lines contrasted against the ugly, sinister forms of the lurking submarines moored alongside their depot ship the *Maidstone*.

The Eighth Submarine Flotilla was made up of S/m D–2 ;

D–8 ; E–4 ; E–5 ; E–6 ; E–7 ; E–8 ; and E–9. The destroyers *Firedrake* and *Lurcher* were attached for special duties, and the whole flotilla was commanded by Commodore (S) Roger J. B. Keyes, C.B., M.V.O. (now Admiral Sir Roger J. B. Keyes, Bt., K.C.B., K.C.V.O., C.M.G., D.S.O.).

The two destroyers *Firedrake* and *Lurcher* acted like brood hawks to their young. Sir Roger always sailed aboard one of the destroyers and accompanied his submarines to sea, not to keep them out of danger, but rather to lead them where action was thickest.

The thought of war and carnage seemed strangely out of place in the quiet of that August afternoon. A 'plane buzzed drowsily high overhead. The shouts of the boys in Shotley Barracks carried strangely clear and plain over the calm waters of the harbour.

One by one the destroyers slipped from their moorings. They had been to feed. They returned to their mooring buoys gorged with fuel, provisions, and stores.

In the wardroom of most of the destroyers one thing in particular seemed to interest all the officers. It was the fact that hypodermic needles and morphia had been issued. In the early days of the war destroyers did not carry medical or surgical aid other than that contained in the First-Aid kits. The instructions which came with the hypodermic needles explained that they were to be used in action to quieten men who were so badly wounded that their sufferings or their cries would unnerve other members of the crew. This was something new. It caught the imagination of the officers. Many took off their monkey-jackets, rolled up their sleeves, and practised giving each other hypodermic injections of saline solutions. It was, at the time, considered a great joke.

And while all this was going on word came from the bridge that all commanding officers were to repair on board the ships of their respective senior officers. They were told that the danger of war was imminent, and that the flotillas might be ordered to sea any time after midnight. When the commanding officers returned to their own commands, the

news they carried caused a stir of quiet but intense excitement. What the Navy had been waiting for was about to happen.

They were about to enter upon the great adventure and take the greatest gamble of all. They were about to gamble their lives for their Empire. They were about to become pawns in a gigantic game of international chess. They would be moved here and ordered there. They would be made to take or be taken . . . a false move on their part, or on the part of those who were sitting back playing the game, meant not just temporary removal from the board, but total elimination.

The whole situation had a nightmarish effect. Was it true? Was it real? Was it just another "panic"? Was it not just another war scare?

As the shades of night settled gently over the harbour and darkness hid the world, silent shapes, which were only a blur against the surrounding darkness, slipped their moorings from the *Maidstone* and made their way noiselessly down the harbour and out into the wastes of the North Sea. They were British submarines, and they headed for the Bight of Heligoland. Should war be declared they would be over there ready to try to frustrate any move made suddenly by the enemy ships, or to take toll of any vessels that loitered at sea. They were Submarines E–6, E–8, and E–9 respectively commanded by Lieutenant-Commanders C. P. Talbot, F. H. Goodhart, and Max E. Horton.

Let us try to picture the feelings of these three commanders. They had been sent out ahead of time to be ready for any eventualities. They were the scouts, so to speak; upon their success or failure much might depend. They were probing the unknown. They were like men sent to feel their way through a jungle or an unlighted tunnel leading none knew where.

They ploughed their way silently towards Heligoland, making a steady twelve knots. The night was dark and fine, the sea moderately calm, and as the watch was about to change at midnight they received the fateful message that war had been declared.

In Harwich harbour the sleeping greyhounds of the deep shook themselves and came to life. Men ran about the decks performing certain duties ; stokers slipped below ; fires were lit and the gauges registered the quickly rising pressure of steam in the boilers. By 3.30 a.m. they had slipped their moorings also and were headed for sea.

The sky was just threatening to pale in the east as destroyer after destroyer slipped quietly along to the harbour entrance, and as they did a resounding cheer, most unexpectedly, broke the silence of the night. It came from the direction of Shotley Barracks. Night glasses were trained on the spot. Three hundred young bluejackets had heard the news that war had been declared. They had tumbled out of their hammocks, rushed down to the end of Shotley pier, and were aboard their own training sloop in their night attire, cheering each ship as she passed them, gliding out into the unknown. It was a most unexpected and impressive send-off. The enthusiasm of these youngsters greatly inspired the crews of the flotillas as they steamed out to sea. Little did those boys think that the war would last four years. They little imagined that every one of them would be sent to sea on fighting-ships before they were very much older.

There was one boy, however, amongst them that morning who very shortly was to inspire the world by his conduct. That boy was Jack Cornwell, who while serving aboard the light cruiser *Chester* was killed and was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross, for adding another glorious page to the annals of the British Navy.

## CHAPTER TWO

*The sinking of the "Konigin Luise" and H.M.S. "Amphion"*

*August 4th–19th, 1914.*

DURING THE FIRST FEW WEEKS of the war the First and Third Destroyer Flotillas operating from Harwich patrolled enemy waters in and around Heligoland twenty-four out of every twenty-four hours. Each flotilla spent sixty-six hours actually in enemy waters, and only allowed themselves thirty hours in which to return to harbour to refuel, take aboard fresh provisions, and after a brief rest of a few hours' duration they returned to relieve the other division.

The "Duty" Patrol Flotilla usually left Harwich between 3 a.m. and 4.30 a.m., according to weather conditions. They proceeded across the North Sea to a previously arranged position. There they made a rendezvous with the ships they were about to relieve. The relieving ships would then regulate their course and speed so that they rounded Terschelling Lightship about 11 p.m. From this point they would spread out and move into enemy waters. They would then deploy in such a way that when daylight came they were covering a line which connected Heligoland with the mouth of the River Ems. If the break of dawn failed to discover the enemy patrol ships and bring about conditions which usually terminated in a "dog fight", our light cruisers and destroyers would retire, making their way back again to the rendezvous, where they would continue their daylight patrol.

Each night they would close in again on the narrower waters as darkness overshadowed the dreary wastes of the North Sea, making positively sure that no enemy ships got

past them. In this way they ensured the absolute safety of our Expeditionary Force. During the whole of the sixty-six hours the ships were on patrol their crews remained at action stations. They never undressed, they slept muffled up in their duffle coats right alongside their guns or their torpedo tubes. The only consolation they had was that they received their "Grub and Grog" with reasonable regularity.

During the first few weeks of the war the British public, backed by the Press, were demanding "What is wrong with the Navy?" . . . "What is the Navy doing?"

It is typical of the men who served on "hard-lying" ships that they never seemed to be interested in where they were going or what they were doing. They had perfect confidence in their officers, and were quite willing to leave their destinies in the hands of the "powers that be". As a matter of fact they nick-named most of their officers, and many are still alive today who will remember "Mad-Cap Harry" . . . "Hell-Fire Jack" . . . and a whole lot more of the do-or-die company who sailed from the port of Harwich. To these men the Captain was the "Owner". The First Lieutenant was "The Bloke" or "Jimmy the One". The signal ratings were "Bunting-Tossers" . . . the engine-room was the "Glory-Hole", etc., etc. In other words they were, both officers and men, one great big happy family.

Typical of the fine spirit which prevailed was the Commodore's signal to his second-in-command when the latter relieved him on patrol. The signal read: "Good Hunting".

I have been writing in general of the men. The officers were different. They were always keen and interested to know where they were and what they were *supposed* to be doing.

One rather amusing incident occurred just after war was declared. The patrol had taken up its position for the night, when the engineer officer climbed up on the bridge and asked his chum the O.O.W. "Where are we, Old Top?" "Old Top" pointed out the position on the chart, which indicated that they were about five miles off Heligoland. The engineer

THE DOTTED SEA AREAS REPRESENT BRITISH MINEFIELDS

[*Photo : Cmdr. C. L. A. Woollard, R.N. (Retd.), F.R.G.S., F.R.E.S.*

*Above :* SHIP'S COMPANY OF THE *Undaunted* AT PHYSICAL DRILL

*Below :* THE DESTROYER *Lance* GOING INTO ACTION ; SHE WAS THE FIRST BRITISH SHIP TO FIRE A SHOT IN THE WAR

was thoroughly taken aback. He gasped "Good God ! Don't tell me we're right in there." The O.O.W. nodded and said, "That's perfectly right, Old Bean." "Good Lord, man, do you think we'll ever get back again ?" The O.O.W. replied rather gloomily, "I doubt it . . . if the enemy are on the job we ought to be mopped up at daylight . . . if not today . . . pretty sure tomorrow."

To this pessimistic forecast the engineer officer replied, "After all the talk in the papers I'd just like to get back once more to see what they've got to say about this. . . . I think I could provide them with a headline :

"British sailors steal apples out of enemy's orchard."

The strange fact is that both these officers lived to experience many such patrols. They both finished the war uninjured, but the engineer officer died shortly after peace was declared.

So while the Press, for the sake of something better to say, published stories of reported activity in the North Sea, and the great majority of the public still grumbled, "What is the Navy doing ?" the greyhounds of the deep dashed back and forth making sure they lost no opportunity the enemy might offer. Thus it was that at 10.25 a.m., August 5th, the *Lance* and the *Landrail*, two of the destroyers of the Third Flotilla attached to H.M.S. *Amphion*, sighted a vessel which looked very much like one of those engaged in the Harwich-Hook of Holland trade. If she was one of those ships, then why was she so far out of position and off her course ? They decided to investigate. The stranger on closer observation turned out to be painted and marked like a hospital ship. This fact aroused more curiosity on the part of the destroyer officers. When they altered course to "close her" she turned away. By this time they began to suspect that there was "something rotten in the State of Denmark". They gave chase.

They flashed past a little fishing vessel which volunteered the information that "the hospital ship had been engaged laying something which looked suspiciously like mines".

Excitement was at fever pitch. The stranger was ordered

to "heave to". She took no notice and kept on going. She was challenged, but she made no reply. The destroyers had worked up to full speed, and they were vibrating like an electric massage belt, skimming through the water with their tails down and their heads up. The crew were ordered to action stations. Every man Jack aboard those destroyers felt it in his bones that a fight was pending.

Evidently the stranger realized it was hopeless trying to escape by running away. She slewed round so as to bring the most guns to bear, and then, dropping her false deck-work, which covered the red crosses painted on her side, she opened fire on the two pursuing destroyers. They immediately flashed a signal back to their flagship the *Amphion* . . . "Engaging the enemy."

Three hearty British cheers broke the tense atmosphere as the signal flashed, and then the guns of H.M.S. *Lance* spoke. Without question or doubt, as far as the Navy is concerned, and perhaps as far as the forces of the British Crown are concerned, the *Lance* will go down in history as having fired the very first shot of the war.

The *Amphion*, meantime, had altered course also, and she was soon within gun range. The *Amphion* was one of the best "shooting" ships of her class in the British Navy. The two destroyers brought their foe to bay. The *Amphion's* guns soon reduced her to a burning shambles. Then, as though a shell had hit one of the mines she had been unable to lay, there was a terrific explosion. Wreckage and debris flew high into the air. Vast clouds of thick oily smoke billowed from the doomed ship. She gave up the ghost and slithered under the cold grey waters, which caused clouds of hissing steam to rise from her red-hot sides. The *Konigin Luise* had paid the price.

Quickly the British vessels lowered their boats and went about the work of rescue. Our men had no quarrel with the individual. They rescued forty-six survivors, and of that number I believe twenty-six were rescued by the boats from the *Amphion*. This was just about fifty per cent of her complement.

After the action was over Captain Fox of the *Amphion* called his crew on the quarter-deck. He congratulated the gun-crew which had been in action for their smart gunnery, but he admonished those who had not had the opportunity of getting into action for lining up on the rails and cheering like a bunch of schoolboys every time the guns which were in action made a direct hit.

Captain Fox reminded his crew that they were now at war, and not at target practice. He pointed out to them the importance of every man remaining at his action station, and not leaving it until the "Cease fire" sounded. He told them of the necessity of keeping a keen look-out by those who were not otherwise engaged. He explained how easily a submarine might turn the tables if everyone took a holiday to watch the show that was going on elsewhere. The crew accepted the lecture in the spirit in which it was given. The fact was they couldn't make themselves realize they were at war. It wasn't long before they had the lesson driven right home.

While making her way back to Harwich, after being relieved on patrol, the *Amphion* struck one of the mines which the *Konigin Luise* had laid the previous day.

At 6.45 a.m. the explosion took place under the fore-bridge. Flame and smoke shot skyward. The bridge was reduced to ruins. The explosion must have set fire to the cordite in the for'ard magazine. The whole place reeked of the sickly fumes. Members of the *Amphion's* crew were imprisoned below on their mess decks and suffocated. The for'ard guns-crews were killed, with the exception of one man. All those on the bridge at the time of the explosion were burned more or less severely. One survivor relates the fact that one of the men who was imprisoned below, while eating his breakfast, calmly reminded his messmates, "Don't forget what the skipper told us yesterday, men ! Every man to his job. Keep steady." He shouted his advice as he strangled for breath in the fume-filled mess deck.

Captain Fox, already injured, vacated the bridge, which was untenable owing to flames, and proceeded aft. He took

charge on the quarter-deck. The accompanying destroyers lowered their boats. The *Amphion's* own boats were so badly damaged by the force of the explosion as to be unseaworthy.

The gallant ship was settling down fast, and the for'ard mess decks were on fire. Every effort was made to bring the fires under control, but to no avail. Two officers went for'ard to make sure the confidential books were destroyed. When they returned Captain Fox ordered "Abandon ship." These two officers left with the last boatload, and they were hardly clear when the forward magazine exploded with terrific force.

The *Amphion* seemed still to have way on her. Completely out of control, she staggered blindly round in a circle until she encountered another mine. For a second time there was a violent explosion, which reduced the forepart of the ship to atoms, and threw debris far and wide high into the air.

Of the twenty-six men from the *Konigin Luise*, rescued by the *Amphion*, only two escaped when the British ship was mined. These two men were taken aboard the *Lark*, and they were killed by flying shell-splinters and debris when the *Amphion* struck the second mine. The gunner of the *Linnet* was severely injured at the same time when struck by a hatch cover, which was sent hurtling through the air to land on the deck of the destroyer.

Before those watching the drama recovered from the shock of the second explosion the *Amphion* slid suddenly astern, and the destroyers which had closed for rescue work had to clear smartly out of her way. The crippled ship sank in a cloud of steam at 7.5 a.m., victim of the German minelayer which she had sunk the previous day.

The casualties were heavy. One hundred and forty-seven men, half the ship's complement, died like imprisoned rats down below on their mess decks, or in the bowels of the ship. Staff-paymaster Gedge was killed at his post of duty in the coding-room below the forecastle deck. Captain Fox and four other officers were rescued, but they were burnt and otherwise injured, as were twenty others of the crew. Two died later in hospital.

The destroyers rushed the injured back to port, and they were landed at Shotley Barracks, where they were cared for in the Sick Bay of the boys' training establishment. Thus it was that these boys who cheered them going out were the first to receive them as they returned burnt and crippled. They were the first casualties of the war so far as the British Navy is concerned, and thus ended the Navy's first encounter with the enemy. The Third Flotilla was relieved by the First, which continued the patrol, but still the newspapers howled and the public demanded to know "What is the Navy doing?" Now they know.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *The Evacuation of Ostend*

*August 6th–14th, 1914.*

IT WAS A GOOD THING both flotillas were not in port at the same time. The First Flotilla were jealous as the dickens of the success which had attended the first patrol completed by the Third. They envied them their run in with the German minelayer. That was a real piece of luck. The fact that the *Amphion* had been lost was taken as "all in the course of a day's work".

The First Flotilla were just burning up waiting to show the Third a thing or two. They were soon to meet the enemy, but they lost their chance to score a real success, owing to the fact that those in authority were still strange to the conditions of modern warfare. To them a destroyer was a thing to be used in the dark. Definite orders were issued against any destroyer attempting to make a daylight attack on a heavily armed enemy ship. It was not long before that order was rescinded.

The First Flotilla proceeded to sea on the morning of August 15th. That day, while heading for enemy waters, the crews of some of the ships amused themselves with a little target practice. The ships ran through a field of floating mines, presumably parted from their moorings due to the heavy weather. The crews of the destroyers shot at the mines with rifles. When they had scored enough hits the perforated casing sank to the bottom of the North Sea, but often enough the men would hit one of the horns of the mine. When this happened it went up instead of down. There was a flash, a dull roar, and a column of black oily smoke would shoot skywards to a great height. When it

reached its greatest altitude a mushroom top would form and hang there for a moment like a gigantic black fungus. Then down would come a shower of oily filth and fragments of the mine casing. If any of these fell aboard the destroyer, the crew would make a wild scramble for the pieces and collect them as souvenirs.

Darkness settled down and the destroyers closed in to form the cordon from Heligoland to the mouth of the Ems River. Men, wrapped in their heavy coats, sprawled around their guns all night, waiting impatiently for the hour when the boiling-hot thick greasy cocoa was served. Those on watch remained wide awake and alert, their nerves on a hair-string, expecting every moment would bring them into conflict with the enemy. The ships crept into enemy waters. They roamed about through his backyard. They were like burglars rummaging through his house. Could it be possible to carry out this brazen procedure night after night without molestation ?

Dawn came. One of those typical North Sea dawns, with a grey mist and a cold watery sky. It was time for the flotilla to sneak out again. The ships turned towards the north and east. Suddenly those farthest inshore sighted a ship. There could be no doubt about it, she was a German, but perhaps she was only a bait.

The *Hind* and another destroyer gave chase. The German ship ran for home. The British destroyers followed, but soon they saw the heavily armoured German cruiser *Yorck*. She had placed herself between them and escape. They had entered the enemy's backyard once too often. This time the *Yorck* stood at the gate, licking her lips, so to speak, ready for the morning feast. She was the whale . . . the destroyers were the nice juicy little mackerel. The heavy guns of the *Yorck* swung round and elevated. They were the wonderful German 8.2-inch guns—the pride of Krupps.

What a mess they would make of these impudent destroyers with their puny 4-inch guns ! She had them between herself and the shore. They could not turn and run east, for German ships were waiting for them there. If they tried

to escape south they would run on the reefs or ashore. The *Yorck* waited off to the north. There was only one thing for the British ships to do, and they did it. They determined to run the gauntlet of fire and try to escape to the west'ard. Some of the trapped destroyers turned and ran round the *Yorck* to the north, others beat it to the south and west. The enemy gunners with their long-range guns blazed away right merrily at each of them in turn, but the British destroyers dodged and twisted like snipe. However, the Germans were good gunners. Their ship was equipped with wonderful range-finding instruments. Salvoes began to straddle the fleeing British ships. The *Goshawk* and the *Phoenix* were finally hit. Shells fell short of the *Hind*, and some ricocheted over her and made a noise like a train going through a tunnel. The youthful Commander of the British destroyers burned up with resentment and anger. They knew their ships, they knew their men ; why were they not allowed to rush in like a pack of hounds after a stag and torpedo that mighty German ship? It was, as a matter of fact, an excellent opportunity to sink an enemy ship thrown away, because of the specific orders which had been issued forbidding the destroyer patrols to attack heavily armed enemy ships during daylight. This order was probably given because we were very short of destroyers available for patrol work at that time, and it was considered by those who gave the orders that we couldn't afford to risk losing our destroyers even if by sacrificing one or two we sent a capital ship belonging to the enemy to Davy Jones. If we found ourselves so short of destroyers at the outbreak of the last war, can we afford to place ourselves in the same predicament in the event of another war ?

How all our ships managed to escape destruction as they dashed past the heavily armed German vessel is hard to explain. It is sufficient to record that they did escape, and it is sound argument to suppose that if it was possible to dodge the *Yorck's* salvoes running away, it is just as likely they would have dodged them if they had rushed in to attack her with torpedoes. Subsequent events will prove that these

same ships did dodge the fire of not one but several cruisers when they made a daylight destroyer attack upon the enemy cruisers. That story will come later.

. . . . .

*August 17th–25th, 1914.*

No sooner were the British destroyers back in port than they were ordered out to sea again. On the night of August 19th–20th several destroyers of the First Flotilla were detailed to a position off the Belgian coast. The *Lizard* and *Lapwing* were ordered to support certain small craft which were preparing to bombard the German troops, who were located just over the sand-hills along the coast. The *Hind* was ordered to proceed into Ostend, and report to the Admiralty whether or not the Germans were in occupation of the city, and to learn what the actual conditions ashore were really like.

As the *Hind* approached the harbour at daylight, August 20th, she passed the armoured cruiser *Euryalus* with Admiral Christian aboard.

It was low tide when the *Hind* steamed into the harbour at Ostend. She crept in close, ready to show a clean pair of heels should the German Army prove to be occupying the city. She continued her course, however, unmolested and tied up at the jetty.

All seemed quiet. The Captain of the *Hind* jumped ashore and strolled as far as the railway depot to stretch his legs. He questioned one or two people and learned the main German Army was nineteen miles from the city, but that patrols were approaching in armoured cars. These advance troops were expected to arrive any moment. When this news got abroad the whole station and depot came to life and the populace went into a panic. Everyone ran here, there, and everywhere. They waved their arms and cried aloud, but nobody seemed to take any notice of anybody else. At first this rather amused the Captain of the *Hind*; then it began to annoy him. He saw there were hundreds of refugees of all nationalities lined up waiting to pass the

Customs and other officials. They were asking these officials to examine their luggage and their papers. These people were demanding immediate transportation to England, but peace-time red tape was slow in dying, and the panic-stricken people were told they must simply wait. Soon everywhere was a scene of indescribable confusion. Two Belgian cross-Channel steamers were moored at the end of the jetty farthest from the *Hind*, but for some unaccountable reason they had not troubled to raise steam. Their Captains, it seemed, did not relish taking a mob of dirty refugees aboard their nice clean ships.

The Captain of the *Hind* stood on the jetty sizing up the situation. Then he tilted back his cap and scratched his head. While he was thus stimulating his brain a lady rushed up to him and exclaimed, "Surely you are a British naval officer." She had recognized him as such in spite of his "sea-rig".

"Won't you help and make these officials do something ?" she pleaded. The lady seemed overjoyed at the presence of even so humble a representative of the mighty British Navy. Not only was she overjoyed, but she seemed quite reassured that everything would now be all right.

She opened her mouth and her heart for the first time in days. She was the wife of a naval officer. She had been travelling with her small daughter in Germany. She had only just escaped when war was declared. She had had nothing to eat.

One must eat even in war-time, so the gallant Captain of the *Hind* rushed her and her child aboard the destroyer and turned them over to the tender mercy of the wardroom steward and a deep-sea cook.

This act of hospitality nearly cost Great Britain a ship. Dozens who found themselves in similar circumstances crowded around the good-natured British officer. They all wished to rush on board his ship. If they had succeeded, there were so many of them they would have sunk her. The situation was as serious as it was pathetic.

Commandeering a motor-car, and arming himself to the

teeth, he told his signalman to do the same. He loaded every automatic pistol available and piled them into the car. He determined to go into the town and see the British Consul, but he also wanted to be prepared to welcome the Germans if he met them first. His effort was wasted. The Consul was not at home. He rushed on to the American Consulate close by.

When he arrived he had to push his way through a large mob who were waiting to have their passports signed. He finally broke through the crowd, introduced himself, and explained that it was his opinion that as the German Army were then actually within the city limits, he thought it time the signing of passports might be dispensed with.

Red tape, however, demanded that passports (for any place but Heaven) be signed. Not seeing any help, he dashed back through the city to the jetty. He interviewed the two Captains of the Belgian ships. They told him they were afraid to put to sea on account of enemy ships and mines.

Time was growing short, and so was the officer's temper. He ordered the Captains to raise steam immediately, threatening to put an armed guard and some of the *Hind's* stokers aboard if they refused to obey his orders.

About 10 a.m. Admiral Christian steamed into the harbour in his barge. The Captain of the *Hind* reported the situation and told him what he had done. The Admiral agreed in everything. An hour later most of the refugees were aboard the Belgian ships. There were undoubtedly spies amongst these refugees, but it was impossible to check them at that time. At 11.30 a.m. the Burgomaster came aboard the *Hind* and begged that she leave the harbour. "The town of Ostend has capitulated to the enemy," he sobbed. "We have no means of defence. If you remain and fire on the enemy you will make them very angry. They will kill me and burn my house."

This seemed a very sound argument, so in view of the general situation the *Hind* slipped her moorings and escorted the two Belgian ships to sea. As a matter of record, the Germans turned away from Ostend when about three miles from the city and did not enter it until ten days later.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *"The Battle of the Bight"*

*August 15th–30th, 1914.*

SINCE LORD NELSON'S DAY very little opportunity had been given to try out men-o'-war in action under conditions of modern warfare. There had been all kinds of marvellous developments during the century, but it was still problematical whether the improvements made in ship construction were ahead of those made in armament, or *vice versa*. Could armour plate stand the pounding of 12-inch and 13.5-inch shells? Could fast destroyers or light cruisers dodge the shell-fire of a heavier-armed but slower ship? Could capital ships be sunk by torpedo attack, delivered by smaller craft, but vigorously driven home? Had science and instruments done away with the human equation, or was coolness and courage on the part of the officers and men still able to tip the scale where apparent defeat seemed certain into glorious victory? Only a real test carried out under conditions of war could provide the answer to these questions.

Destroyers and torpedo craft were generally thought to be most efficient, as has already been stated, when carrying out their attacks at night. It was the general belief that being fast craft, and almost invisible in the dark, they could cause material losses to an enemy fleet during the hours of darkness, provided, of course, they could locate the enemy fleet at sea. "Big Ship" officers argued that destroyers attempting a daylight attack against armoured cruisers or capital ships would be literally blown to smithereens by shell-fire long before they ever got within torpedo range of their intended victims.

The possibilities of submarines being effective in modern

warfare were just as much in doubt. "Big Ship" crews looked upon them with contempt—called them "glorified sardine tins" and nicknamed the officers and men who served in them "The Trade". The crews off ships of the "Big Navy" never missed an opportunity to remind men of "The Trade" that they had to be "wet-nursed" by a parent ship, and led around on a leash like poodle dogs to prevent their getting lost or running into trouble.

The men in the submarine and destroyer flotillas, however, loved the craft they served in. They had confidence in the young, dashing type of officers chosen to command them, and they were willing to rush into the very gates of Hell during daylight or after dark to prove that speed, courage, and resourcefulness could cheat even the Devil himself if necessary.

At the outbreak of war we had one school of thought which argued that submarines and destroyers, light cruisers, and torpedo craft should be used for defensive work only. They claimed their job was to guard our coast against raids by enemy cruisers, and to protect our shipping against attack by raiders and enemy submarines. Also they argued that it was their job to protect our capital ships against attacks by submarines when at sea.

The other group were convinced that *Offence* is the best *Defence* always.

Apart from all this doubt and argument, one thing stood out clear and certain : Britain was not prepared for war. We did not have properly equipped or adequately protected naval bases anywhere on the whole coast. We didn't have half enough light cruisers and destroyers to do the jobs required of them.

About this time Harwich was rapidly being changed into a real war-time naval base. Sheds, to house provisions, stores, and supplies, were being erected on Parkeston Quay. Many extra mooring buoys were being laid in the river and a heavy anti-submarine boom defence net was placed across the entrance to the harbour. Felixstowe, on the north shore of the harbour, was being turned into a base for seaplanes.

In the naval and private shipbuilding yards throughout

the British Isles the work of completing the many light cruisers and destroyers then under construction was accelerated. Extra shifts were working feverishly night and day. The light cruiser *Arethusa* was the first of this batch to be completed, and she was sent to Harwich. Armed with torpedo-tubes and 6-inch guns, she looked every inch a "fighting-ship", and Commodore Tyrwhitt made her his flagship.

It is rather difficult to describe a naval battle without going into technicalities which none but experts in naval warfare could understand. The purpose of this book is to preserve for posterity the deeds performed by the rank and file who served in the Harwich Striking Force, and where possible to give individual credit to those to whom it is due.

To simplify matters, it may be good policy to give first a general idea of the purpose of each plan of action, and then tell how the plans worked out in actual practice.

No one person can see all that goes on during a naval engagement at sea. Therefore the author has spent many years collecting the evidence and opinions of eye-witnesses who took part in the adventures recorded in these pages. It is the author's experience that, while officers can often give a clean account of the strategy and purpose of an action, the lower deck ratings give a better description of the actual happenings when judged from a human-interest point of view.

The submarines of the Eighth Flotilla, accompanied by their two destroyers H.M.S. *Firedrake* and *Lurcher*, had been actively engaged operating in enemy waters from the moment war had been declared. Commodore Roger J. B. Keyes had sailed aboard one or other of the destroyers, and personally supervised their operations. Roughly their plan of campaign had been to send three submarines close in to Heligoland, under cover of darkness, where they remained at periscope-depth the next day seeking an opportunity to attack enemy ships. Two or three others did the same thing off the mouth of the River Ems, and the rest of the flotilla cruised around on the surface in company with

the *Firedrake* or the *Lurcher* inviting the enemy to come out and fight. Even if they didn't get a great deal of action they accumulated a certain amount of worth-while information regarding the movements and habits of the enemy ships, particularly their patrol ships.

As the result of reports made by Commodore Keyes, a council of war was held, and a definite plan decided upon. Five submarines were to go into the Bight of Heligoland and take up their usual positions. The other three, accompanied by the *Firedrake* and *Lurcher*, were ordered to go right into the enemy's own backyard and pull faces at them over their own garden wall. Once the enemy gave chase, the submarines and destroyers were to retire in a north-westerly direction, coaxing the enemy ships out to sea as far as possible. If things got too hot the submarines were to dive, and the two destroyers were ordered to beat it "hell-bent-for-election" towards home.

If all these plans materialized, the Harwich force, under Sir Reginald Tyrwhitt in his new flagship the *Arethusa*, were to be so placed that one-half of the light cruisers and destroyers could sneak in behind the enemy ships from the south-east or shore side while the rest closed in behind them from the north, thus cutting them off from Heligoland. Cut off from both the Ems and Heligoland, they would have to fight, and it was hoped they would call for plenty of help.

Admiral Sir David Beatty, with his battle cruisers, was also to be at sea waiting handy at a definitely agreed rendezvous. His ships would clean up on anything that stayed around looking for trouble, and if the main body of the German High Seas Fleet put to sea, intent on sending Admiral Beatty and his ships to the bottom, then the plan would have worked out one hundred per cent, because Admiral Jellicoe was going to be right down there hiding just over the horizon in a bank of fog, waiting patiently to rush in and gobble up the High Seas Fleet.

The plans looked then, and still sound, very simple. The only difference is that in actual practice they are very much more difficult of execution than appears on paper. The

North Sea, even the southern portion of it, is a mighty big place. Fog, mist, and low visibility, bad weather, etc., can upset the most carefully-thought-out plans. Then there was just the possibility that instead of luring the enemy out to sea he might be already out to sea waiting for our ships to try such a bold plan, in which case the British ships would have found themselves in the position of being intercepted instead of being chased.

However, something had to be done. The people and the Press were demanding it.

Because of their comparatively slow speed the submarines left Harwich after dark on Wednesday, August 26th. H.M.S. *Arethusa* led the First and Third Destroyer Flotillas to sea about daylight next morning. They were joined at sea by the light cruiser *Fearless*. They regulated their course and speed so as to arrive at the prearranged rendezvous off Heligoland at daybreak, Friday, August 28th. They were right in position at 4 a.m. They spread out and made a sweep towards Heligoland Island at 25 knots. They didn't see a thing until nearly three hours later, when the 4th Division of the Third Flotilla sighted an enemy destroyer and promptly gave chase.

The weather was misty. The sun hid itself behind grey watery-looking clouds. The sea was a long oily swell. There was no horizon . . . the sky was just about the same colour as the sea, and visibility was very poor.

At the time the enemy was sighted the visibility had improved to around four to five thousand yards. In other words, the guns on any of the ships engaged in the manœuvre that day could shoot and be effective at double the distance they could see.

No sooner had the 4th Division of the Third Flotilla (*Laurel*, *Lysander*, *Laertes*, and *Liberty*) chased off like four greyhounds after a coursed hare than out of the mists popped several more enemy destroyers and torpedo boats. They all appeared to be heading towards Heligoland, so the *Arethusa* and the rest of the 3rd Division opened fire and turned to port, altering course in order to head them off.

The hare to which the 4th Division had given chase turned out to be a fox. She led our destroyers right under the guns of an enemy light cruiser. A brisk action followed, and our four destroyers had to take plenty of punishment. The well-thought-out plan had gone for naught. Enemy ships were popping up all over the place. It wasn't a battle . . . it was a "dog-fight". It was a case of every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost.

The 4th Division were in a fix, so they turned to attack the enemy heavy ships with their torpedoes. They made a wonderful effort, and actually made a hit with one of their torpedoes, but the damage done was not sufficient to sink the enemy cruiser, although she was forced to turn away.

The following is an eye-witness account as told to me by Chief Yeoman of Signals Geo. W. Smith, of H.M.S. *Forrester* :

"I saw destroyers of the 4th Division of the Third Flotilla turn to make their attack, then suddenly I saw a shell hit the 4-inch gun aboard the *Liberty*. Both it and the gun's crew were blown to kingdom come. Another shell hit the bridge. Her Captain, Lieutenant-Commander Barttelot, had his leg shot off, but he hung on to the bridge rail giving his orders until another shell took his head off as clean as a whistle. The *Laurel* raced in to try and draw the fire off the *Liberty*, and she got a severe mauling, until the enemy were forced to train their guns on the *Laertes*, which was running in even closer towards her target than the others had done. For a moment it looked as if the *Laertes* meant to try and ram the enemy ship. The firing was now at point-blank range. Suddenly there was a flash aboard the *Laertes*. We saw the centre gun lift into the air and it seemed to dissolve. The whole of her gun's crew were wiped out, but their heroic sacrifice was not in vain. The attack proved too much for the German Captain. His ship had been hit by one torpedo, and the determination of the attack had made him draw his fire from the *Arethusa*. He turned tail and headed for home."

This action proved that destroyers well handled could drive home a torpedo attack against a heavily armed ship in broad daylight with reasonable hope of success.

CHAPTER FIVE

## The Battle of the Bight (*Part 2*)

*The sinking of the German destroyer V–187*

THE WAR WAS VERY STRANGE to us at this particular time. It was only a few weeks old, and we could not visualize just what kind of a youngster it was going to turn out to be.

The ships we served in were built to fight. We were trained to fight. But none of us knew exactly just what a ding-dong naval battle would be like. It is hard to describe one's feelings. I felt like a boy who wants to do something which he knows is dangerous, but whose curiosity to experience the thrill of doing that particular thing overcomes the fear of the danger involved.

On August 27th, 1914, we received the signal to weigh anchor, and before long we were following the *Arethusa* out of Harwich harbour. Commodore Tyrwhitt was flying his flag aboard the *Arethusa*. The light cruiser *Fearless* and the First and Third Destroyer Flotillas were to accompany him on his sweep through the "Bight". Our instructions were to sweep as far as Heligoland, reconnoitre, and report everything of importance to Admiral Sir David Beatty. He was to lay off with his battle cruisers, ready to dash in and finish off anything we could manage to stir up.

We received no intimation that we might expect to meet the enemy until about five o'clock on Thursday night, when activity was reported from Borkum, the Ems River, and Heligoland. Then we received information that the enemy would probably be met early in the morning of Friday, August 28th, 1914.

We were warned to change into clean underclothing, as

a precaution against infection in case we were wounded. We were told nobody could be allowed to turn into their hammocks that night. Great was the excitement which prevailed. We had not as yet seen the colour of an enemy flag.

All through the night we dashed ahead, piercing the darkness with anxious eyes. We never knew the moment we might make contact with an enemy squadron. We were all a bit jumpy, seeing things which weren't really there. So the night dragged on, until just before daylight the destroyers were ordered to open out into columns one mile apart and form divisions line ahead, columns disposed abeam to port.

The *Arethusa* led the Third Flotilla two miles ahead of the First Flotilla, of which the *Forrester*, the ship I was serving on, was one.

As daylight came the First Flotilla was ordered to deploy 20 degrees to port and maintain a speed of 17 knots. They were told to have steam for full speed ready at command. At 5.45 a.m. the port wing column of the Third Flotilla reported smoke bearing north by east, but owing to the mist it was undetermined whether it was the smoke of enemy ships or from our own. Our battle cruisers were reported as being in position forty miles to the northward of us and steaming in a south-easterly direction, accompanied by the 2nd Cruiser Squadron.

At 5.50 a.m. our destroyers challenged the strangers, who immediately opened fire. We received the signal, "Attack the enemy. Open fire." Only one division of the Third Flotilla was within range. The enemy apparently consisted of three light cruisers and about forty destroyers. As we closed the enemy the firing became general. It was pretty hot. Four-inch shells began to fall. They seemed to be exploding all around us. By this time we were going full speed (about 29 knots). As this was our first time under fire everyone was more or less all of a tremble. This condition, however, soon passed off as the excitement increased.

At 6.30 a.m. the enemy turned north-east and made for the shelter of the forts of Heligoland, which could be just seen in the distance about five miles away. At this time two

of our destroyers seemed to have been pretty badly hit. They had a list to starboard, and flames and steam could be seen pouring from their hulls. Six of the enemy destroyers looked the worse for wear. Two of them were on fire aft ; the other four were enveloped in dense clouds of smoke and steam.

Course was altered to cut them off. At this particular time other enemy ships were seen steaming out of Heligoland harbour. They evidently intended to attack our starboard wing. The signal was made to alter course 180 degrees to starboard, it being the intention to try to draw them out and lure them on to where our battle cruisers were waiting about thirty miles astern.

The leader of my division did not receive the signal to retire, so the four of us, consisting of the *Ferret*, *Forrester*, *Defender*, and the *Druid*, still kept up the action. Conditions became too hot to be pleasant. Suddenly the Commander seemed to realize that we had missed some signals, so we promptly turned and returned at full speed and closed the *Arethusa*.

We had been running about twenty minutes when we suddenly saw a destroyer coming towards us at full speed. She must have been doing about 33 knots. Shots were falling about her stern. We challenged her, but received no reply, so we altered course again to cut her off. She turned like a baited bear and opened fire on us. We returned the compliment. We were four to one, and we pumped lyddite shells into her at a range of less than three hundred yards. Some of the shells must have hit her in the engine-room, for she suddenly stopped dead in her tracks, but she kept on fighting her guns. We circled her at full speed, and as we did so we identified her as the V–187, flying the flag of the German Commodore.

Those of her crew who were still alive fought like the heroes they were. Outnumbered four to one, they fought their ship to the last gun and the last man. It was one of the gamest fights I could ever hope to witness. All her guns except one were soon out of action. Only one man at that gun seemed capable of doing anything. He loaded it, trained

it, and fired it. He seemed positively enveloped in smoke and flame. The enemy ship was a floating holocaust. Smoke, flame, and steam poured from a dozen or more shell-holes in her side, as well as from every opening in her decks. As we stood and admired the man for his marvellous courage a shell struck the gun-tripod and blew the gun and the gunner to smithereens.

The moment the last gun was out of action the "Cease Fire" was sounded, and the order given to lower away our boats and pick up survivors. Men were in the water swimming or clinging to gratings and anything else that would float. Two lifeboats were already in the water, when all of a sudden we were subjected to terrific fire. The boats were recalled. We had to leave the Germans to their fate. Out of the mists appeared three German light cruisers. Our ships were in a bad fix, as we were surrounded on three sides by enemy ships. I could picture my boat receiving the same punishment we had just handed out to the German destroyer.

We opened fire and a made a dash to the northward. It was our only outlet from the trap. One lifeboat was left behind as there wasn't time to pick it up. We never expected to see the crew of that boat again.

The fight from now on raged fast and furious. We were joined by four other boats from the Third Flotilla, and formed into line ahead. We went to the northward hell-bent-for-election, with a German light cruiser on either side of us and one on our tail. They were giving us the fight of our lives, and we were giving them everything we had to offer in return. As one salvo fell near us we would zigzag 20 degrees and try to dodge the next. This was kept up for about ten minutes, but it seemed an eternity. We were outmatched completely, and it seemed to be only a matter of time before we would be shelled under.

Our force had become somewhat disorganized. Suddenly we saw the *Arethusa* in the distance. She was spitting steel, fire, and steam like a firework display. Two enemy cruisers were racing along parallel to her. They were giving her broadside after broadside from their heavy guns, until the

air looked as if it was filled with brickbats. You can see those big shells coming towards you like cricket-balls.

We came up on the disengaged side. I'll never forget that sight. The brand-new flagship looked like a scrap-heap. Her sides were perforated with shell-holes. Most of her guns were out of action, and Commodore Tyrwhitt stood exposed on her shell-wrecked bridge. His flag-lieutenant, Eric W. P. Westmacott, and ten men were dead ; they had been shot down all around him.

## The Battle of the Bight (*Part 3*)

### *The "Saucy Arethusa"*

The flagship found herself right in the thick of the fight. Twice in quick succession she was forced to fight two enemy cruisers single-handed, but her crew were one hundred per cent for their Commander. They took the damnedest punishment under shell-fire any ship's crew ever took and survived. Subjected to a withering fire from the two enemy ships at one time, they fought back doggedly. The calm example their Commodore set, as he stood exposed on the shell-wrecked bridge with his flag-lieutenant, Eric W. P. Westmacott, and ten men lying dead all around him, steadied their nerves and made them shoot to real advantage.

Even when their case looked hopeless, and they were fighting two enemy ships with only one six-inch gun left in action, the gun-layer took his time, fired his shot, and made a direct hit on the *Frauenlob*, with such telling results that the enemy cruiser burst into flames and had to turn away and discontinue the action. This left only one other cruiser to be reckoned with for the moment.

But the flagship had been holed in no less than thirty-six places. Steam, fire, and smoke poured out of every hole and from her decks. Only one gun was left on its mountings. Twenty members of her crew were wounded by shrapnel.

An enemy shell had set fire to her cordite charges, and the terrific blaze which followed was controlled only by the coolness and courage of Chief Petty Officer Wrench.

One gun was no good against a dozen. The *Arethusa* hoisted a signal, and ordered the 1st Division of destroyers which had just appeared on the scene to attack the enemy with torpedoes. This division consisted of the *Acheron*, *Archer*, *Attack*, and *Ariel*, but according to all accounts the destroyers which delivered the actual attack on the German four-funnelled cruiser that morning were the *Acheron*, *Archer*, *Attack*, and the destroyer *Hind*, belonging rightly to the 2nd Division. I have heard the story of this torpedo attack from many people, but I think that told by Stoker J. Leach is probably the most interesting of them all.

He gives no facts which are not confirmed by his own commanding officer and others who took part in the battle, but he gives to posterity that perfectly priceless story of how the cook behaved. I believe his name was Tubbs, and naturally all his shipmates called him "Tubby". No matter what his name was, "Tubbs" or "Tubby" was something of a comedian and fancied himself as a vocalist. You meet the type on every ship the Navy ever sent to sea. Leach gives us the picture of "Tubby" trying to look very unconcerned about the whole thing. Hell and damnation might be loose all around ; armoured ships might be blotted out by shell-fire, just like a puff of breath snuffs out the flame of a candle, but "Tubby" didn't worry. His job was to peel potatoes and dish up the hash . . . it was somebody else's job to fight the enemy and do the worrying. So "Tubby" peeled the vegetables, stirred and tasted his mysterious concoctions, and all the time the battle raged he never stopped singing. The only thing noticeable was that he only seemed able to sing one song, and in the more critical moments when his voice failed momentarily he would whistle, "Get out and get under . . . Get out and get under . . . Your bloomin' old automobile", which was one of the most popular vaudeville songs of the time.

As it is men like "Tubby" who win battles, let us record

the story as told by Stoker P. O. J. Leach, of the destroyer H.M.S. *Hind.*

"My ship the *Hind* had not come in for any of the early fighting, as we were at the northern end of the line when it all started. In accordance with previous instructions we had altered course to the westward. This was about 8 a.m., when suddenly we received signals saying several of our ships were disabled and in need of assistance. Naturally we turned back again, and we joined up with the *Acheron* and her destroyers just as the flagship ordered them to attack the enemy with torpedoes.

"Commander Morey of the *Acheron* turns and speeds full ahead towards the enemy cruiser. She was followed by the *Attack*, and we nipped in between her and the *Archer*. The German cruiser wasted no time ; she dropped a curtain of shells right in front of us. The *Acheron* twisted and turned like a snipe flying from the guns. We followed her. Our captain had told those of us who didn't actually have action stations to stay under cover out of the way of shell splinters. We might have obeyed orders if it hadn't been for 'Tubby' the cook. Just about this time it was getting really exciting. I saw one shell hit the 4-inch gun aboard another destroyer and gun and crew just seemed to disappear into thin air.

" 'Tubby' the cook was having one hell of a time trying to prepare dinner. He was having the devil's own job to keep his pots and pans on the galley-stove, as the *Hind* careened all over the place trying to dodge the salvoes of shells. He was like a bloomin' turtle. First he'd poke his nose out of the galley door and take a look at the fight ; then when he saw the flash of the enemy's guns he'd pull his head in again and whistle, 'Get out and get under . . . Get out and get under . . . Your bloomin' old automobile'.

"That gave us all an idea, so those who weren't actually fighting guns or closed up at their torpedo stations sat on a rail watching the show, and we yelled at the very top of our voices, 'Get out and get under . . . Get out and get under . . . Your bloomin' old automobile'.

"About this time we put our helm over ready to fire

our torpedoes. Just as we did so a salvo of shells fell short. They'd have hit us if we hadn't altered course.

"Away went our torpedoes, and they ran straight and looked like making a hit. Our First Lieutenant was only a kid of about nineteen, and when he saw his precious tin fish were running true, and thought they were going to make a hit, he let a yell out of him as would have shamed a Red Indian. I saw the 'Old Man' (Captain) give him a friendly kick in the seat of his pants as much as to say 'Keep quiet'. But we knew why he had yelled, and we just stopped singing long enough to give 'im three hearty cheers.

"It looked as if the enemy were getting real mad. They raised their sights and let us have another salvo, and as true as I'm telling you, them shells passed so close over the deck that they lifted the cap right off Leading Seaman Hillcrest's head, just as he bobbed down to take his sights before firing his torpedoes. When we saw him lose his hat we all points our fingers at 'im and yells louder than ever, 'Get out and get under . . . Get out and get under . . . Your bloomin' old automobile'."

## CHAPTER SIX

### The Battle of the Bight (*Part 4*)

*Another Tight Corner and the Sinking of the "Mainz"*

Our destroyers having for the moment driven off the heavy enemy cruisers and saved the *Arethusa* from being completely wiped out, the flotillas reformed and turned to the west'ard, as it was thought the enemy ships would reach Heligoland, which was only five miles distant, but at this particular time a heavy mist made visibility very poor.

When the destroyers manœuvred into position they saw their flagship had been far from idle during the time they had taken the brunt of the battle upon themselves. Her decks were cleared of debris ; her glorious dead were laid out on the quarter-deck covered with blankets ; and her armourers had succeeded in repairing three of her 6-inch guns and making them ready for further action. Chief Yeoman of Signals George W. Smith, serving aboard the *Forrester*, confirmed what I have previously said—that he counted no less than thirty-six shell-holes in the sides of the *Arethusa*. He added, "Before she got things squared away she looked more like a disreputable junk-heap than a brand-new light cruiser."

While all this excitement had been going on, roughly from about 6.50 a.m. to nearly 9 a.m., Commodore Keyes and his submarines were off in the other direction patrolling up and down, trying to stir up trouble, and they finally found plenty. About 10 a.m., almost an hour after the *Arethusa* and her destroyers had turned west'ard and headed towards home, Commodore Keyes and his "bait" ran smack bang into several enemy cruisers, backed up by the usual

destroyer divisions. According to the prearranged plan the submarines dived, and the *Firedrake* and the *Lurcher* started off towards the position where the rest of the British Fleet was supposed to be, at the very fastest clip they could force out of their engines. One of the crew said afterwards, "The vibration was so great, due to the terrific speed we were going, that it seemed nothing less than a miracle the plates held together."

Hard pressed, with enemy ships on both quarters and astern, these "bait" ships fought what guns they could bring to bear on the enemy and wirelessed Commodore Tyrwhitt telling him they were threatened with annihilation by five German cruisers. Once more the *Arethusa*, the *Fearless*, and their brood of destroyers turned and raced back to accept overwhelming odds.

It would appear that the five German cruisers were the *Mainz*, *Koln*, *Stettin*, *Frauenlob*, and *Ariadne*. Once again, that memorable day, the *Arethusa* found herself fighting two ships at once, and both of them superior in gun-power. The battle developed into just another "dog-fight". The most extraordinary things happened. Formations seemed to have been split up. At one point of the scrap, when the *Stettin* and *Mainz* seemed to have got the upper hand, and were just about to finish off the *Arethusa*, submarine E–4, in command Lieutenant-Commander E. W. Leir, came up to periscope depth, risked being rammed by a dozen enemy and friendly ships which were tearing about all over the place, and fired a well-directed torpedo at the *Stettin*. It was running so true that the German cruiser was forced to turn away to miss a certain hit, and this gave the "*Saucy Arethusa*" a little respite once more.

The destroyer *Hind* was having a point-blank range battle with the powerful German cruiser *Mainz*, and her Commander was wondering why the *Mainz* didn't blow them to blazes. From wondering just why they were being permitted to remain on the face of the earth he began to marvel at the wonderful marksmanship of his gun-layers. He stood on the bridge of his command, literally awed by

the terrible havoc his 4-inch shells were doing to the *Mainz*. At least so *he* thought.

The *Hind* actually fired thirty-five rounds from her foremost 4-inch gun in twelve minutes, an average of six rounds per minute. It was the most extraordinary sight one could ever hope to witness. Bang ! . . . would go the gun, and a good substantial piece of the *Mainz* would be chipped off or knocked over just as if it were a target in a shooting-gallery. Bang ! . . . would go the gun again, and one of the *Mainz's* guns would jump into the air. Bang ! . . . would go the gun again, and this time a funnel would just seem to melt into nothing. . . . Bang ! again, and over went one of her masts.

"To be honest about it, I worked up a real enthusiasm for destroyer gunners and British ammunition. I was sadly disillusioned when I found out afterwards that some of our own light cruisers had been pouring salvoes of 6-inch shells into the poor old *Mainz* from the other side, where I couldn't even see them. It was their broadsides, making solid hits, which were doing the damage I was crediting to my single gun," the Captain of the *Hind* explained after the fight.

I believe the light cruisers which came up in the nick of time, and once more saved the *Arethusa*, were ships of the *Southampton* class, under command of Commodore Goodenough, and if this gallant officer is entitled to credit for that part of the action it must also be recorded that just previous to going into action with the *Mainz* he very nearly succeeded in ramming one of our British submarines, just as it was about to take a pot-shot at an enemy vessel. She had to do a crash-dive to escape, and when she got back to periscope depth her intended victim had vanished in the mists.

The part the *Firedrake* and the *Lurcher* took in this phase of the battle cannot be overlooked. Having escaped annihilation by the "skin of their teeth", as one *matelot* put it, these two destroyers contributed their share to the battle. Their crews were in at the death of the *Mainz*, and they were filled with admiration to see the enemy cruiser put up the gallant fight she did. With all her funnels "gone by the

board" ; with her masts shot away, and her decks and sides belching steam and smoke from a hundred different places, with every gun but one dismounted and put out of action, she refused to lower her flag and continued to fight her one remaining gun. It was an heroic but pitiful sight. Demolished, but not beaten, her crew formed into their divisions on her deck and stood uncowed and unashamed as their comrades fought the last gun.

The British destroyer *Goshawk* went close in with the intention of rescuing the gallant German crew, but the men fighting the last gun aimed at the *Goshawk* and made a direct hit when the range was less than 200 yards. The enemy shell passed right through the *Goshawk's* wardroom.

There was only one thing to do, and that was to put the solitary gun out of action. A well-placed shell registered a direct hit, and the gun and her gallant crew were silenced for ever.

The *Mainz* was in a sinking condition. The crew were still standing lined up on her burning decks. Their officers stood smartly to attention with revolvers drawn. Commodore Keyes aboard the *Lurcher* realized what had happened. The German Commander had not yet given the order "Abandon ship". This was too much for Commodore Keyes. He ordered the *Lurcher* to put alongside the sinking *Mainz*, and the British crew swarmed aboard the crippled German vessel, overpowered the officers and rescued what were left of the crew. Actually three hundred and forty-eight officers and men were taken off the *Mainz*, but many were so badly wounded they died shortly afterwards.

Shrouded by banks of mist, ships on both sides fought as opportunity offered or expediency demanded. Circumstances such as these probably coined the phrase "dog-fights". No other name could better describe them. It was just as if all the dogs had been rounded up in two particular cities, taken to one place, and then turned loose. One moment three terriers would be fighting one mastiff ; the next three mastiffs would be fighting one terrier ; everything went and no holds were barred. If we are proud to record famous sayings, said at historic moments, it may be interesting to

record what one humble bluejacket said after he had been seriously wounded. A shell had shot off his foot just above the ankle. While the fight lasted he had been left unattended. When the lull came he was given first aid. His shipmates were fixing him up as best they could, when one said sympathetically, "Hard luck, mate, losing your bloomin' foot," and the wounded man replied: "Hard luck be blowed. . . . It's evident you were never troubled wif corns."

## The Battle of the Bight (*Part 5*)

The action off Heligoland, as the Battle of the Bight is usually known, became somewhat confused because signals intended for certain senior officers never reached them. As a result, one-half of the ships engaged never knew what the other half was doing, or what they themselves were supposed to do.

In the thick of the action, Lieutenant-Commander Leir, R.N., in command of E–4, had one of the most extraordinary experiences that ever fell to the lot of a submarine captain. I served under Commander Leir in 1918, when I was navigating officer of S/m K–12. He was at that time in charge of the Firth of Forth Submarine Flotilla of K-boats operating with the Battle Cruiser Squadrons.

Commodore W. E. Goodenough, commanding six light cruisers, attached to the Battle Cruiser Squadron under Admiral Beatty, joined in the battle late in the forenoon.

On the alert for enemy submarines, and not knowing our own submarines were in the vicinity, Commodore Goodenough sighted E–6 and promptly tried to ram her. Only the peace-time practice of training submarine crews to operate with the Fleet during manœuvres saved E–6. Thanks to such training, Lieutenant-Commander Talbot was able to dive in sufficient time to allow the flagship to pass over him without doing any real damage. Notwithstanding the excitement the cool-headed Commander of E–6 recognized the vessel which attacked him as she showed up out

of the fog. Had Commander Talbot been less efficient, he might easily have sunk the flagship *Southampton* with a torpedo.

While this little drama was being enacted the German Destroyer V–187 fell victim to the gunnery of our surface ships. Cut off from the rest of her flotilla, the unfortunate destroyer put up a splendid fight against overwhelming numbers. Seeing that she was hopelessly crippled and liable to sink at any moment, our light cruisers lowered two boats and sent them to help in the work of rescue. But if the crew of V–187 fought gallantly, other enemy crews certainly showed a lack of chivalry. Several enemy ships opened fire on our boats while they were engaged in the work of rescue.

The credit for the sinking of the German destroyer V–187 must go to the 3rd and 5th Divisions of the First Flotilla. The 5th consisting of the *Goshawk*, *Phoenix*, *Lizard*, and *Lapwing*, and the 3rd being made up with the *Ferret*, *Forrester*, *Defender*, and *Druid*. Commander the Hon. Herbert Meade of the *Goshawk* still smarted from the punishment his ship and crew had received from the *Yorck* without being allowed to retaliate, and when he was given his opportunity to attack in this action he fought his ship and led his division with such determination and gallantry that he received the D.S.O. He was ably seconded by Commander Geoffrey Mackworth of the *Ferret*, leader of the 3rd Division and every officer and man under their command.

Leading Signalman H. G. Dann, who afterwards served aboard H.M.S. *Miranda*, summed up the respect the lower deck ratings had for this type of officer when he said, "The thing that struck me most during the whole war was the fact that the vast majority of officers who served in light cruisers, destroyers, and submarines lived for their ship and the service they could give their country. The Royal Navy was their whole life and being, not just a part of their existence. I actually know of cases where officers whose ship was undergoing repairs, and out of action, went to sea aboard other ships for fear they might miss something."

The action was soon raging hotly again, and it was necessary for our ships to move off to keep in touch with the

enemy. The cutter with its crew had to be left behind in enemy waters, with little hope of rescue. What might have happened to them is hard to surmise, if it hadn't been for S/m E–4. Having witnessed all this through the periscope, Commander Leir made an attack on the enemy cruiser *Stettin* when she arrived on the scene, but the torpedo missed as the cruiser made a quick alteration in course. The enemy cruiser then steered straight for the attacking submarine and forced her to dive.

When Leir came to periscope depth again he found that the sailors left behind by the *Defender* had stripped themselves to the waist and were using their clothing for bandages. They were busily engaged binding up the wounds of the German seamen they had rescued. The E-boat at great risk came to the surface and took on board the members of the *Defender's* crew, together with one German officer and two other prisoners . . . "as a sample", Leir explained afterwards. Water, biscuits, and a compass were given to the German seamen he was forced to leave behind, and they were told the direction of Heligoland, five miles away.

Owing to the weather conditions, and other factors which developed, none of the other submarines became engaged. The action was still raging up and down the Bight. Heavy fog patches hung low over the water when Admiral Beatty with his battle cruisers raced into the *mêleé*. He steered for the sound of gun-fire, certain that the enemy would send out his battle cruisers to drive off our lighter craft. The *Arethusa* and her attached destroyers had just left the sinking German cruiser *Mainz* for Commodore Goodenough to finish off, when they sighted two large enemy ships, the *Koln* and the *Stettin*. These two vessels alone were more than a match for the *Arethusa*, but she immediately went into action. When, however, her crew saw the huge shapes of the battle cruisers loom up out of the fog they thought their "numbers had been hoisted", or, as one seaman put it, they thought they were "labelled for the bone-yard".

The *Arethusa*, banging away at two ships her own size, was doing one of those little stunts which earned her the title

[*Photo : Cmdr. C. L. A. Woollard, R.N. (Retd.), F.R.G.S., F.R.E.S.*

OUR FIRST BAG

GERMAN MINELAYER *Königin Luise* SINKING AFTER HAVING BEEN SHELLED BY *Lance*, *Landrail*, AND *Amphion* (CAPT. CECIL H. FOX) ON AUGUST 5, 1914

[*Photo: Cmdr. C. L. A. Woollard, R.N. (Retd.), F.R.G.S., F.R.E.S.*

OUR FIRST LOSS

H.M.S. *Amphion* SINKING AFTER HAVING STRUCK A MINE LAID BY THE GERMAN MINELAYER *Königin Luise*, AUGUST 5, 1914

of "*Saucy Arethusa*". What a relief it was to recognize the new arrivals as Admiral Beatty's ships ! The German ships turned and ran, but their running did them no good. A couple of well-placed broadsides from the 13.5-inch guns and the flagship *Koln* was reduced to a flaming ruin. The *Stettin* disappeared into the fog and smoke to the northward. Just as the *Koln* burst into flames another shape loomed out of the fog . . . the little *Ariadne*.

Leaving the sinking *Koln*, Beatty's ships took after the new arrival. She wriggled and zigzagged to shake off her impending doom, but the first salvo of heavy shells wiped her out of existence. Having completed their task (such enemy ships as remained having retreated under cover of Heligoland), Admiral Beatty gave the signal "Retire".

Retracing their course, they once again came across the crippled *Koln*. She was still flying her colours defiantly at her mast-head. There was nothing else to do but finish her.

The second salvo crashed home. Beatty ordered four destroyers to the spot to rescue the crew, but it was futile. All they found was one lone stoker clinging to a piece of wreckage. The ship, the German Commodore, and his complement of 380 men had been blotted out of existence by the terrible destructive force of the 13.5-inch shell just as one would swat a fly.

The *Queen Mary* and the *Lowestoft* both had narrow escapes from torpedoes fired by enemy submarines. The first sea fight was over. Commodore Tyrwhitt called his brood of light cruisers and destroyers together once more, re-formed them, and headed back for home. Admiral Beatty covered their rear with the Battle Cruiser Squadron. They certainly needed covering, for some of them found they were pretty badly hurt when they had time to lick their wounds.

The "*Saucy Arethusa*" found she wasn't so saucy any more, and after struggling along gallantly under her own power for a time she was finally forced to accept a tow from H.M.S. *Hogue*, commanded by Captain Wilmot Nicholson.

The sea was fairly calm, but the night was pitch dark, and it was not safe to use lights, so the work had to be done

under very difficult conditions, and both crews are deserving of credit for a very fine display of seamanship under most trying conditions.

The destroyer *Laurel* found herself in bad shape. She had suffered plenty of punishment during the action when a quantity of her own cordite exploded, and her Commander, Frank F. Rose, although badly wounded, remained on the bridge directing operations until the *Amethyst* took her in tow. The *Laertes* was another lame duck and was towed back by the *Fearless*, but it is satisfactory to report that every ship which had taken part in the action was back in port before nightfall, August 29th, 1914. Our losses amounted to only thirty-five killed and forty wounded. The *Arethusa* was hardest hit, with one officer and ten men killed and another officer and sixteen men badly wounded. The enemy had lost three cruisers and one destroyer sunk, and several more badly damaged. From that day onwards these fine ships of the British Navy and their gallant crews were named "The Harwich Striking Force".

It is hard to say what our submarines would have done had the plans matured as originally intended. As it was, they did not have a chance owing to the poor visibility. Those boats which did sight surface ships lost them again in the fog or mist before they could properly identify them.

It is no easy matter to distinguish friend from foe among the smaller type and class of warships, even when conditions are favourable. During the hours the action was fought, those at the periscopes in the British submarines saw nothing at all or just a glimpse of greyish shadows speeding through banks of mist and fog.

As the result of this experience Admiral Jellicoe recognized that submarines could be better employed patrolling certain well-defined positions regularly rather than dodging about with surface ships. As the war progressed these submarine patrols were organized, and when an action between the two fleets was pending all submarines went to certain defined "Fleet action stations" and stayed there. These stations commanded strategical positions likely to be

used by the enemy surface ships, but our own ships stayed clear of them, thus avoiding confusion.

Shortly after this action E–7 was ordered to the Dardanelles, and E–8 and E–9 later distinguished themselves in the Baltic. The other three boats that took part in the first real naval battle of the war continued their patrols in the North Sea, and two of them, E–5 and E–6, were later destroyed in the mine-fields through which they had to navigate.

. . . . .

*August 1914.*

(*Eye-witness stories of what happened aboard various destroyers during the heat of the action.*)

The 4th Division of the Third Flotilla had been very heavily engaged in various "dog-fights" entered into with the enemy, and it was the destroyers *Laertes*, *Laurel*, and *Liberty* of this division which suffered most severely during the torpedo attack they carried out against the *Mainz*. To Petty Officer Edward Taylor, torpedo-gunner's mate of the *Laertes*, goes the credit of firing the torpedo which hit the German cruiser and damaged her so badly that she stopped dead and fell easy victim to the gunnery of our other ships.

Lieutenant-Commander M. L. Goldsmith of *Laertes* fought his ship until she was little better than a smoking ruin. The ship was so seriously damaged that she had to be towed home by H.M.S. *Fearless*. To an observer her decks appeared a shambles ; down below a shell had exploded in No. 2 boiler, killing Stoker W. E. Brazier and Stoker P. O. Ernest E. Taylor. Blinded by smoke, in danger of death from escaping steam, choking, and half smothered in the fumes of burnt explosives, Stoker Petty Officer Frederick Pierce assumed all responsibilities heaped upon him in the emergency with coolness and a resourcefulness that must be highly commended. He carried on, and did everything that had to be done with efficiency until his superior officer, Engineer Lieutenant-Commander A. Hill, who had been busily engaged repairing the steering-gear, dived below

to take charge of his precious engines, or rather what was left of them.

Notwithstanding the pounding the *Laertes* had received, not a man had been killed on deck, although some had been wounded, amongst whom was Sub-Lieutenant George H. Faulkner, who, with blood streaming from his wounds, tied them with strips of torn clothing and went right ahead fighting his gun as long as he could see anything at which to shoot.

Mr. Charles Powell (they always call a warrant officer "Mister" in the Navy), acting as gun-layer of the centre gun, conducted himself as though he was just doing battle practice instead of fighting for his very life, and it is said that he made so many hits his shipmates cheered him. When the fighting was all over he resumed his duties as acting Boatswain and cussed and fumed a bit at the "bloody awful mess of wreckage which had to be cleared away before the *Fearless* could take them in tow".

When an enemy shell plunged down through the deck and exploded in the cabin-flat, setting it on fire, Stephen Pritchard, Stoker Petty Officer, dived right down into the cabin-flat after it. He went into action with a fire-hose so quickly that he got the blaze under control before it did much damage. There was a lot more to his conduct than can be realized from the mere telling. That cabin-flat was a red-hot, roaring, stinking hell after the shell exploded. Hard steel had been melted with the terrific heat generated by the exploding chemicals ; smoke and fumes were so thick that a less stout-hearted man would have turned back. These men, however, who served in hard-lying ships, although they were flesh and blood the same as the rest of us, couldn't be beaten—in fact, they didn't know there was such a word as "defeat" in the English language.

And this is the story I heard from a man off H.M.S. *Laurel*. I met him when he attended the naval banquet Lieutenant-Commander F. Davis and I organized in Toronto on the occasion of Admiral Jellicoe's visit in 1931. I am sorry to say I forget his name. He told me how his beloved Commander, Frank F. Rose, stuck to his post of

duty after having been wounded in both legs, and positively refused to allow his men to carry him below until 6 p.m., when everything had been made ship-shape and Bristol-fashion. He remained on the bridge until the *Laurel* had been taken safely in tow by the *Amethyst*. He told me how the youthful Number One Lieutenant, G. R. Peploe, took over command from his badly wounded captain and continued to fight the ship until the close of the action and then brought her out of danger in a gallant manner under most trying conditions.

"And what were these trying conditions ?" I asked.

"Well," he said, "yer see, a ruddy enemy shell lands kerplunk right among our own lyddite shells which we were using at the centre gun, and up goes McGinty's goat. I thought the ruddy world had come to an end. The after-funnel was practically demolished and a shell shot away a whole tangle of pipes in the boiler-room and damaged the main steam-pipe. The crew of the centre gun were knocked down and thrown about all over the place ; nine men were killed outright and there must have been as many more wounded. When I picked meself up I sees Alf Britton (Stoker Petty Officer Alfred Britton) working a hose trying to put the fire out which had started around the centre gun, and he was kicking lyddite shells out of the way of the flames when they must have been damn' near red-hot and likely to explode any moment.

"There was Sam Palmer, a leading seaman and Gun-layer 2, standing on one leg like a ruddy stork, and fighting his gun just as though nothing had happened. I could see the blood dripping from his wounded leg till it formed a pool on the deck. Al. Sellens, an A.B. and L.T.O., comes along with a crippled wing, and makes Palmer sit down long enough for him to tie up his wounded leg and stop the bleeding. Al. said to Sam, 'Sit down, you blink-it-ty blank-blank this-that-and-the-other and let me tie you up, or you'll be so weak you can't fight your gun,' and after Sellens fixes Sam up he goes around giving first aid to a dozen others and never got himself fixed up until everyone else was looked after."

"I'll admit conditions aboard must have been 'rather trying' about that time," I smiled, and urged him on with his story.

"Down below conditions were such they beggar description. Busted steam-pipes, twisted metal, steam, smoke, and fumes as thick as a London fog, and the 'black gang' working like a bunch of ruddy slaves. Five or six of them I believe got decorations out of that scrap, and most of them were stokers.

"I remember Gorst, Crane, and Hawkes, and a fellow named Bateman, worked down below with Engineer Lieutenant-Commander Meeson. From up on deck it looked impossible for men to remain down below and live. And I takes off me 'at to Mister Meeson because he patched up what was left of her innards and brought her out of action under her own steam, although I'll admit we had to be towed home at the finish.

"There's one funny thing I remember, and that was the way Chief Stoker George Sturdy jumped out of the way to prevent one of the lyddite shells Alf Britton was throwing out of the fire falling on his toes. He was working a hose trying to put out the fire when Alf started throwing the shells clear of the flames, and Alf wasn't the least bit particular where they landed. What he did took guts, and plenty of them. After the enemy shell exploded the first lot, there wasn't a man aboard who didn't expect the rest to go also, and when you looked at the mess those lyddite shells had made of the men they killed it didn't help yer stomach any. I know mine felt pretty sick, but Alf worked as if he were gettin' real mad over something."

This same man told me about the *Liberty*, next ship of the line. "The *Liberty* was a 'happy ship'," he told me. "Her skipper, Nigel Barttelot, was a swell fellow, and everyone felt real sorry when they heard he was killed. A signalman who claimed he was standing on the bridge right beside his Captain said a shell took his head clean off as if it was done with a knife, and that his body stood straight up for a moment or two before it began to wobble and fell to the deck. And you've got to hand it to old 'Jimmy' Beadle, the Quartermaster. He stayed at the wheel for more than an hour after his Captain was killed. He himself had been badly wounded.

"A lot of us thought the *Liberty* was a goner. I don't

think she would ever have got back to Harwich if it hadn't been for a chap named Galvin . . . I think that was his name. He was a Stoker Petty Officer, anyway. He led a working party down below and they plugged holes and leaks in the hull until they had them stopped, and half the time they were working with the water clear up to their armpits."

To show how true most of the stories which have been passed on to me are, I checked many of the names mentioned against the published lists of decorations, and although they do not give the name of the ship the men served in, or the reason for the decoration, I find that Pritchard, Brazier, Taylor, Pierce, Powell, and Sub-Lieutenant Faulkner of the *Laertes* all received decorations, as did men of the names of Britton, Palmer, Sellens, and Sturdy, mentioned in connection with the *Laurel*. Beadle and Galvin of the *Liberty* were decorated, but I cannot find that Engineer Lieutenant-Commander Meeson and some of his gallant stokers received any recognition for the very valuable contribution they made towards saving their ship from sinking. Apart from this it would appear that the "powers that be" had taken particular notice of the same incidents which had appealed to an ordinary observer.

After reading and digesting the story of the wonderful deeds these mariners of England (and when I say "England" I include the whole and every part of the British Empire) performed, is it any wonder that Admiral of the Fleet Sir John Jellicoe said what he did? Having been approached with the request that the men of the Grand Fleet be granted as much leave as were the officers and men of the Harwich Flotillas: he replied: "The Officers and men serving out of Harwich earn and deserve all the leave they receive, and what is more, whenever I meet them I'll take off my hat and I won't expect to receive a salute in return." That tribute, coming from the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet, in my humble opinion, places the deeds these officers and men performed away above anything else that has been recorded in the naval annals of the British Empire.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### *Mines . . . and the First Gas Attack*

THE GERMAN HIGH COMMAND had plenty of mines, and they certainly put them to good use right from the very moment war was declared. Not only did they lay thousands of mines in strategical positions, but they moored them about twelve feet below the surface so that they were invisible. They also organized their submarine patrols so that one or more U–boats were always on the job watching the different mine-fields. If a ship blew up they sent out S O S calls for help, and when the rescue ships slowed down to perform their errand of mercy they found themselves at the mercy of the enemy submarines, which did not extend it to them. Thus it was that H.M.S. *Hogue*, *Cressy*, and *Aboukir* were sunk by enemy submarine U–9. It is little use harping back and wondering why these three old cruisers, with hardly speed enough to get out of their own way, should have been sent to patrol near the enemy coast without adequate destroyer protection.

Our submarine Commanders refrained from sinking enemy ships while they were engaged in rescue work, but there was no obligation on their part to do so. We Britishers have been too much the gentlemen. We can't produce a champion heavy-weight boxer because we teach him to box rather than to fight, while other nations teach their men to go in and try to kill their opponent . . . win the fight never mind how . . . but win !

When we stop diplomatic conversations and tell the rest of the world straight from the shoulder to "shut up or put up", then we'll have peace, provided always that we can support our attitude with the ways and means of giving those who doubt our earnestness the damnedest trimming in the

shortest possible time the world has ever known. And we should also let it be known that our attitude is this : once a nation is proved an aggressor, and breaks the peace of the world, she forfeits all rights as a nation and suffers the fate of having her identity submerged in that of her neighbours. Moreover, for our children's sake, don't let us weaken. If those who start war are still alive when it is over, then make such an example of them as the world has never seen, so that other madmen who follow after them may think twice before they try to set the world ablaze again.

I am so much in favour of peaceful living, I am so much in revolt at the thought that the coming generation may have to suffer and sacrifice what our generation was forced to do, that I unashamedly advocate building up the nation's defences to such a state of perfection that no other nation will dare to make war. I also hope that we, as the greatest commonwealth of nations, should never forget our honour, so as to give any other nation a just cause or excuse for resorting to war. To ensure peace, every nation must recognize the just needs and necessities of the others, and unselfishly give them what they require for peace and happiness. Selfishness and greed are the root of all evil. When criminals find it doesn't pay to be crooked they reform ; when nations think they can get what they want by putting up a big bluff, then it is time we were ready to call their bluff. One cannot expect to sit in a poker game with a couple of pounds in his pocket when the "sky" is the limit. Neither can a nation which honestly desires peace afford to rely on the desire alone.

At the outbreak of the last war I heard a Minister say grace before a meal, and he said, "Thank God for what we are about to receive, and thank God we've got a Navy." I have always regretted that we didn't have twice the Navy we did have at the outbreak of war. It is all very well for some of our high political "Big Bens" to stand up in the House of Commons and say, "The Navy will dig the enemy out of the Kiel Canal like rats out of a hole" . . . "Our Navy will blast its way through the Dardanelles". That is fine

talk, but let those who do the talking give those they rely upon to do the fighting something with which to fight.

To get back to the story of "The Harwich Striking Force". The *Hogue*, *Cressy*, and *Aboukir* were lost because they were sent out to patrol enemy waters when neither the First nor Third Destroyer Flotillas were patrolling the area. The First Flotilla had left Harwich on some special stunt the day before the sad event took place, and the Third, or duty flotilla, were actually on their way out, but arrived too late to be of any assistance.

When the enemy submarine commanded by Lieutenant Otto Weddigin hit and mortally wounded the first of the three old cruisers the others should have kept going, but the war was very young, and instead of leaving their crippled sister to her fate the other two stopped to try to rescue the crew. Mr. Weddigin had just about as much trouble bagging the whole three as a farmer would have shooting three domestic cows tied up in the barnyard. However, the serious loss taught us a lesson, and never afterwards was a heavy, slow ship allowed to attempt rescue work when submarines were known or suspected to be in the vicinity. Rescue work was left entirely to ships of high speed and shallow draught, and usually a number of destroyers would circle around the one performing the rescue work at full speed, ready to ram or depth-charge any submarine which attempted to interfere with the work of mercy.

To illustrate the necessity of following such a practice let us take the case of the *Cormorant*, a British steamer which was torpedoed about thirty miles out from Harwich. The First Destroyer Flotilla sighted her in distress about 2.30 p.m. as they were returning from patrol. She was in a sinking condition, having apparently struck a mine. A destroyer stood by her to take off the crew, but while doing so she was subjected to torpedo attack by an enemy submarine, and had she been a big ship she would have undoubtedly followed the other to the bottom of the North Sea. This particular destroyer had a charmed life, because if I remember rightly she was just gathering stern-way when a mine exploded

under her bow, and although it did considerable damage she was able to make port.

Mines in the southern portion of the North Sea were just about as thick as peas in home-made pea soup. Mine-fields had been laid everywhere, and it was evidently the practice of the enemy to have one or more submarines watch each mine-field, so that they could report the identity of any ship blown up. Because we were not prepared and properly organized we couldn't sweep up the mines as fast as they were located, and instead of having properly equipped mine-sweepers locate the mine-fields we had to rely on one of our ships getting blown up before we knew where the danger lay. Thus it was that Harwich earned its second and unenviable title, "The Grave-yard of the Fleet". In fairness to those gallant men who laid down their lives in the course of their duty let us not run the risk of again throwing away the flower of our manhood because of unpreparedness.

We were forced to use what we had, and therefore our Harwich destroyers were compelled to work overtime with a vengeance. The best way to catch the German U–boats which were patrolling the mine-fields was to surprise them on the surface when they were charging their batteries during the hours of darkness. Caught under such circumstances the use of the ram was the most effective weapon.

The 2nd Division of the First Flotilla was sent out to patrol an area off Terschelling Lightship. Our submarines had been warned to steer clear of this particular patrol. The destroyers *Badger*, *Beaver*, *Hydra*, and *Hind* were plugging along into a stiff, choppy sea. Darkness had fallen and visibility was poor. Our ships knew that any warship they met that night must be an enemy vessel. Every man Jack aboard was keyed up like a piano wire. The officer of the watch and the look-outs were straining their eyes until they were convinced they saw things which weren't really there.

Suddenly, however, down wind came the whiff of oil smoke given off by a Diesel engine . . . just as sure an indication of the presence of a submarine as the odour of a skunk indicates its presence.

Then things happened . . . presto ! as the magician says. A dark shadowy ghost loomed up for an instant a shade darker than the surrounding night. The O.O.W. barked out a staccato order. The knife-like bows began to swing . . . Would they hit or would they miss ? . . . One second . . . two seconds . . . the dark shape was coming right ahead. "Steady the helm !" rang out the order. Would the helmsman steady her in her swing and bring her back dead on ? . . . The bows swing past . . . everybody holds their breath . . . the ghost ship grows bigger . . . the conning tower shows up. The bows of the destroyer which have swung past crawl back again . . . Oh ! so slowly do they appear to swing . . . but back they do come and steady right on the degree . . . CRASH ! . . . The dreadful sound of tearing steel . . . the agonized cry of doomed men . . . the shock of the blow as the destroyer stops almost dead in her stride and the submarine heels over on her beam ends. The weight of the destroyer forces the crippled submarine under like a man drowning kittens in a sack.

The other destroyers which were following had to spread out to avoid ramming the *Badger*. They switched on their searchlights. They saw the rammed submarine come bobbing up to the surface momentarily . . . they aimed their guns to finish her off, but were ordered not to fire . . . not because of sympathy for the crippled submarine's crew, but because they were likely to damage each other as the shells ricocheted off the water. Slowly the submarine gave up the ghost and sank. Those witnessing the drama could hear the hiss of escaping gas . . . gigantic bubbles rose to the surface . . . men tried to cling to her conning tower until she slipped under, but the suction evidently dragged them down. Our destroyers put over their boats, intending to rescue any survivors, but as the searchlights stabbed the darkness of the night not a soul was seen.

When the news finally leaked out that Commander Charles Freemantle had used his ship the *Badger* as a battering-ram and sunk a German submarine, great were the rejoicings. The *Badger* was badly, but not seriously,

damaged. She was at no time in danger of sinking, and the dry-dock people soon put her in shape again.

One little incident which stands out in connection with this story is the fact that "Badger Hall" held a shoot and fifty brace of pheasants were sent to Commander Freemantle with a message of congratulation. The Commander very generously divided the birds amongst the four destroyers which had taken part in the hunt.*

Talking of pheasants reminds me of a story of a different colour.

The destroyers *Hydra* and *Hind*, a sub-division of the division which had taken part in the previous episode, were ordered out on patrol, and they were steaming along at about fifteen knots across the Dogger Bank when they sighted a suspicious object. The *Hydra*, the leading ship, signalled, "Suspicious object right ahead. Stand by." The watch on the bridge made out through their glasses a submerged object which appeared just awash. Great was the curiosity aroused. What could it be? Some guessed a ship bottom up, others a submarine on its beam ends! There were others, however, who thought it might be a new kind of booby trap, or it might be a submerged Zeppelin or a kite-balloon. The *Hydra* signalled, "Circle around and be ready to attack." Circle around they did, but as they worked their way to leeward they wondered what under heaven had struck them. They received the full force of the most terrible stench it is possible to imagine. The crews of both ships were overcome with fits of coughing and nausea. They smothered their faces in handkerchiefs, and those who didn't boast handkerchiefs held their nostrils with their hands.

These men had the distinction of being victims of the first gas attack of the war. (Canadian troops take note.) Their suspected enemy was a gigantic dead whale. It had evidently hit a mine early in the war, for its burial should

*Incredible as it may seem, I have been informed by Commander Freemantle that he learned since the war ended that the enemy U-boat referred to in the above incident was not destroyed, but that very badly damaged, and having lost several of her crew, she staggered back to port.

have taken place months before. Those who have had the experience of smelling the odour from a whaling station or ship know how terrible it is. Try, then, to imagine what it would be like from a whale which had been dead a long time. That was one occasion when two ships of "The Harwich Striking Force" beat a hasty retreat from a single enemy.

Since the war began feverish activity broke out in every shipyard, and October 1914, saw many additions to "The Harwich Striking Force". The light cruiser *Aurora*, a sister ship to the *Arethusa*, was taken over at Devonport and commissioned by Captain Alan G. Hotham. The *Undaunted* was commissioned, and had done her trials, but developed trouble in her fuel-feed tanks. She did her gunnery trials and torpedo practices off Portland, and a week was spent in gunnery at towed targets, battle practice, and other "evolutions".

Captain H. Ralph Crooke had done all the preliminary work following her commission, but because the *Undaunted* was intended to lead a flotilla of destroyers—in other words she was intended to be a "Captain (D) ship"—he was transferred to another command, and the *Undaunted* was given to Captain Cecil H. Fox, who was a much more experienced officer as far as handling destroyers was concerned. Captain Fox had recovered from the burns and wounds he had received when his previous command, H.M.S. *Amphion*, blew up on a mine, and having been discharged from hospital he was anxious to get back on active service again.

Events were happening thick and fast at this particular time, and H.M.S. *Undaunted* joined up with Commodore Tyrwhitt's squadron on October 16th and took over the Third Destroyer Flotilla. Next morning at daybreak she steamed out of harbour with the 1st Division, comprising the *Lance*, *Legion*, *Lennox*, and *Loyal*. She was ordered to make a sweep off the enemy coast. H.M.S. *Hawke* had been sunk the previous day by an enemy submarine, and this—following on the loss of the *Hogue*, *Cressy*, and *Aboukir*—caused all kinds of criticism.

The *Undaunted* led her division over to Horn's Reef and then they organized and made a sweep which took them past Heligoland, over to the Hook of Holland. Their disappointment was keen. They were spoiling for a fight, as the crew of the *Undaunted* wanted to test out their new fighting machine on something more exciting than towed targets.

At about four bells in the afternoon watch four evenly distanced fingers of smoke were noticed by the O.O.W. (Lieutenant Woollard). The ships themselves were still hull down over the horizon. The British ships were in a position about sixty miles west of Texel, off the north coast of Holland. There was a moderately stiff wind blowing, but the weather was fine and clear. Captain Fox knew there were no other British ships in that vicinity, and he ordered, "Full speed ahead . . . clear decks for action." Quickly they increased their speed from a leisurely sixteen knots until they were going over thirty knots, or, as sailors say, "Hell-bent-for-election".

Within half an hour the hulls of the other ships could be seen plainly from the bridge of the *Undaunted*, and they were recognized as "S" class German destroyers. The German ships were steering south when first sighted, but when they saw the British force they turned east and tried to beat their way back to the shelter of their own shores.

A stern chase followed. The *Undaunted* was in the middle, with two destroyers on either beam eight cables apart. They worked up to such a terrific speed that the vibration was so great they found it impossible to use the range-finders. The *Undaunted* opened fire with her foremost 6-inch guns at 10,000 yards. The 4-inch guns of the destroyers were, of course, not within range. The first shells fell short, but soon they managed to fire one over the retreating enemy ships. Then, employing the "bracket" system, a hit was soon registered, and the type of shell changed to lyddite. The effect of a hit by a single lyddite shell must have been truly awful, for the *Undaunted* soon had the enemy destroyers in difficulties, and slowed them down, so that our destroyers came within range.

Seeing that escape was impossible, the enemy ships turned to fight. They seemed to concentrate their gun-fire on the destroyers, as if reserving their torpedoes for the light cruiser *Undaunted*. They put up a splendid fight. Twice they managed to get into position and fired torpedoes at the *Undaunted*, and their aim was exceedingly good. One torpedo was seen to pass right under the ship, while another missed the stern by a "coat of paint", as one man put it.

The enemy's guns were no match for the 6-inch guns of the *Undaunted*, and when they failed to sink her by torpedo attack it wasn't long before the S–119 toppled over like a wounded animal. Then she righted herself and sank until her decks were level with the surface. Then her bows went under and she made her final dive. The time from when the first shot was fired until the first destroyer went under was just a little over two minutes.

Once more the remaining German destroyers tried to torpedo the *Undaunted*, and the fight raged at a range of about 3,000 yards. This time no less than seven torpedoes were seen rushing through the water, but the bubbles caused by the escaping air from their engines gave their position away, and the British light cruiser was able to avoid them by use of her helm.

It wasn't long before another of the enemy vessels was observed to be afire both fore and aft. She blew up and sank on a level keel, the flames licking upwards to the sky until the waters of the North Sea smothered them out.

The *Undaunted* had manœuvred into position so that she was safe from further torpedo attacks (unless a submarine was lurking in the vicinity) and her 6-inch lyddite shells wreaked havoc on the two remaining enemy ships. The masts and funnels just seemed to be chipped off as if they were made of plaster. Both vessels became enveloped in dense clouds of smoke, fumes, and vapour. Just about this time the British ships passed over the position in which S–119 had sunk, and they saw a number of poor wretches clinging to pieces of blackened wreckage, but the fight still had to go on.

By this time the *Lennox* and *Loyal* were finishing off one of the remaining enemy ships, S–116, while the *Legion* and *Lance* tackled the other. The *Undaunted*, however, didn't waste much time after giving her particular adversaries their *coup-de-grâce*. She steamed to within 300 yards of the S–117 and placed one 6-inch shell under her bridge right at the water-line. The shock of that lyddite shell must have been terrible, for the enemy ship just seemed to shiver . . . there was a loud explosion, and she dived headfirst to join the other three. It is only necessary to see a beautiful ship turned into a horrible mess of crumpled iron and steel—funnels and mast shot overboard ; the bridge an unrecognizable mess ; huge gaping holes in her sides and decks . . . a million-dollar machine turned into a junk-pile in the space of a few minutes, to realize just what modern naval warfare really is like.

At the word of command the "bunting-tossers" hoisted the signal "Out boats and save life". But the boats of the *Undaunted* were found to be useless. The concussion from her own guns had blown the bottoms out. The destroyers did the best they could. They saved two officers and twenty-nine men. They picked up the Captain of S–119, but he was so badly wounded he died shortly after being taken from the water. Over two hundred enemy sailors must have died within that hour. Lieutenant Davidson of the *Loyal* had one of his legs shot away. One seaman was killed and several others wounded when an enemy shell hit the *Loyal* in the stern and disabled her after 4-inch gun. The bridge of the *Legion* was hit—four men were wounded and the steering-gear temporarily put out of action.

The *Loyal* and *Lennox* were ordered to return to harbour with the wounded and prisoners. The other three ships remained on patrol until relieved by the *Arethusa* and her destroyers.

The *Undaunted* and her destroyers were given an enthusiastic welcome when they returned to port, but three hours later, after they had taken aboard provisions and supplies, they were out to sea again. It was thought the

enemy fleet might be out, and a general sweep of the North Sea was undertaken, but without results. It was ascertained from the survivors of the enemy ships that they were making their way from Emden to Zeebrugge. They were intended for raiding purposes in the English Channel, but once more the Harwich Force had struck with all the deadliness and venom of a snake, and if we must have war that is the only way to wage it. Pussy-footing won't get anywhere, as far as action at sea, under the sea, or in the air is concerned. "Offence is the best defence." Strike and keep striking, and if the other side won't come out and take their medicine, then see we have sufficient 'planes and ships to wipe them out while they stay in their harbour. If we must sacrifice men (and we did sacrifice millions in the last war over a four-year period), then let us sacrifice them in a gigantic, merciless attack driven home right at the outset of the war. Let us be in a position to blot out every point of military importance. War is bad business, and the longer we prolong the agony the worse it will be.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### *Nothing of Importance to Report*

OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER, 1914, found us figuratively and actually "feeling our way", just muddling through. We were not only trying to accustom ourselves to the realities of war, but also trying desperately to make up deficiencies, and correct mistakes which cropped up from time to time like sore thumbs. We were finding out every day that theory is often very much different from actual practice. We found out that human nature couldn't stand the constant grind of twenty-four hours' duty out of twenty-four. We began to realize that even if a man was "off duty", but remained fully dressed, and more often than not wet through, and spent his "off duty" hours trying to sleep curled up at his action station, he was far from efficient when he was due to take his duty watch again.

Light cruisers and destroyers could have done with twenty-five per cent more officers and men than they carried at this time, and perhaps no better illustration could be given than to quote how the signal ratings were expected to "carry on". Nobody I have spoken to has any "kick coming". They are apt to laugh over the whole thing now, but perhaps it is just as well to mention these things because very often the Lords of the Admiralty might not just credit conditions as they really existed, and it would be just as well that we make sure these things cannot happen in the event of another war, because if they do we may not have time to correct them before the serious damage is done.

The wooden flag- "lockers" aboard small ships, with the efficient system of pigeon-holes, were ordered put ashore because it was feared, and perhaps rightly so, that they would do heavy damage to the bridge crews from splinters

if hit by modern shells. I believe that many of these wooden pigeon-hole contraptions were turned into hen-houses by the coastguard service after they were landed.

The canvas substitute for these flag-lockers was a headache for all who had to use it. Not only were they saturated with breaking seas or heavy spray, but it was almost impossible to find the flags required in a hurry. The result was that you would hear the C.O. or the O.O.M. issuing pious prayers or sulphurous blasphemies, begging, imploring, threatening the signal ratings to "Get a ruddy move on," while the signal ratings themselves were in a lather of sweat trying to "get a move on". But the flags were wet and sodden, and it was impossible to see if a wrong flag had been placed in a wrong pocket until it had been dug out of the pocket and partially at least unfurled. Then the wind would take a hand and the bunting would be flapping and slashing all over the place. Let us hope and pray that nowadays signals are put together in a position sheltered from the weather.

Then again, during the early days of the war it was customary for the orders to be given by word of mouth from the bridge to the flag deck. Try to imagine if you can a light cruiser dashing at thirty knots through a North Sea gale, with the waves slapping her like battering-rams, and the 6-inch guns banging away happily, with all the rest of the din and confusion of a "dog-fight" going on all around you, and the Captain trying to yell at the top of his voice, "Second Division, First Flotilla, attack enemy with torpedoes." It was just about as reasonable for the Yeoman of Signals to catch the message correctly as it was to convince the Captain that the Yeoman of Signals had said "Dab and plaster that muddy bucket of pitch," and not "Damn and blast that bloody son of a bitch." Not once, but a dozen times, ships missed signals and got "adrift", and things happened which could have resulted in serious consequences, because we hadn't an efficient system and sufficient men. Frayed tempers don't tend to efficiency.

If you wanted to communicate between the bridge and

the wireless room it was necessary to send a "messenger", a boy of fourteen or fifteen, who could quite easily be washed overboard or be blown to "Kingdom come" before he arrived at his destination.

Most destroyers had one leading signalman and a junior. To give them a little rest when in harbour the Quartermaster of the Watch would look out for signals and then yell "Bunting, they're a bobbing." Probably half the time it would be a false alarm.

The "bunting-tossers" were a fine body of men, and deserve well of their country. The Yeoman of Signals, and the Leading Signalman in "small ships", were to their Captains and Commanders what a Flag-Lieutenant is to his Admiral. It is their job to see everything and miss nothing. They are willing, loyal, and faithful.

One story is told about a Yeoman of Signals who had served with the same Captain eight years, four of them during the war. Their ship had been rammed and so badly damaged it was thought she was sinking. The Captain had given the order "Abandon ship stations." He was making a final tour of inspection to see that everything possible had been done to try to save the ship. All hands were standing at their stations with their life-belts on. The Captain, however, had not had time to think of life-belts, but his faithful Yeoman of Signals was tagging along behind him everywhere he went carrying the Captain's life-belt in his hands.

Only one complete set of flags was aboard each small ship. If any of them got blown or shot away you had to guess the answers. There wasn't a decent kind of signal lamp in the hard-lying ships until the 10-inch signalling searchlight was introduced. Everything might be "haywire", but not the spirit of the men. The more punishment and hard work they received the better they seemed to like it.

One thing the Navy has which the Army hasn't. The leaders lead their men into action, and pick the hottest spot for themselves. They take the same chance, and nine times out of ten the officers in hard-lying ships take upon

themselves the brunt of the hardship and suffering, and spare their men all they possibly can. Amusement was hard to find and shore leave at a premium. Notwithstanding these facts the morale of the men remained wonderful. Ships organized "Poo phoo" bands and concert parties. Typical of the natural wit and humour which prevailed aboard "happy ships" was the instance of the flagship *Arethusa*. She had just returned to harbour. When darkness came she was ordered to sea again. One destroyer was temporarily "out of action", and could not proceed to sea, so her crew lined up against the rails, and as the flagship glided past they played on their make-shift band and sang, "I know you've got to leave me, but I hate to see you go."

The flagship and her flotilla returned before daylight. They had been out on another false alarm, but as the flagship passed the sleeping destroyer her band commenced playing "Here we are . . . here we are . . . here we are again." Let modern science make all the improvements and changes they like, but if Britain is to remain "Mistress of the Seas" let us make sure that we do nothing to kill, and do everything in our power to preserve, that wonderful happy-go-lucky spirit which during the last war was so evident amongst the officers and crews of the hard-lying ships and the submarine navy.

It is wrong to give particular mention to any one class of individual. The chain is only as strong as the weakest link, and as far as my personal observations went to show "The Harwich Striking Force" had mighty few weak links. The stokers and E.R.A.'s and the engineers deserve just as much credit as the seamen, torpedo, and gunnery branches of the Service. It was about this time that boys and men from the reserves, particularly the R.N.V.R., were drafted to ships of the Harwich Flotillas, and they turned out very well on the whole.

*October 1914.*

"M" class destroyers joined up at Harwich as fast as they were built, and formed the Ninth and Tenth Flotillas.

These were fine boats with a speed of 35 to 38 knots when driven all out. Just as Commodore Reginald Tyrwhitt took the "*Saucy Arethusa*" into action, before she was forty-eight hours out of the dockyard's hands, so did the *Meteor* meet with adventure on one of her first patrols.

On October 15th, 1914, the *Meteor* was doing her speed trials in the English Channel, in company with the *Miranda*, and they were having a lot of fun racing each other to see which was the faster ship. First one would pull ahead a little, then the other would catch up, and they would fight it all over again to see which could take the lead.

Their sharp bows were cutting through the water and making a white feather of a bow wave. The music of the water sloshing past the sides was good to the ears of her new crew, who were as happy a bunch of men one could hope to meet. They couldn't get over their good luck. Here they were aboard one of the fastest, newest, and best destroyers in the British Navy, while some of their friends were serving in all kinds of old crocks. The race ended in this manner. The Commanding Officers reported that one ship was as good as the other, so they buzzed off for Harwich.

On October 16th the crews just carried out routine duties. One destroyer was practising taking a submarine in tow.

The 17th being a Saturday, the ships were washed down and made to look as spick and span as possible. Then "Make and mend" was piped, and all hands went to work making or repairing their clothes. Aboard most naval ships there is a "Jewer", a man who for a financial consideration will make another man's uniforms for him. Sometimes when money is not over flush they have been known to trade their skill as naval tailors for another shipmate's "tot" for as long a period as three months, and this particular "Jewer" was heard to remark, "And see you don't go and get yourself bloody well killed before the three months is up."

Everything was peaceful and the day dragged on to an end. It looked like all hands except the duty watch would have a good night's sleep in harbour. No such luck. At two

bells in the second dog watch the Quartermaster yelled "Buntin', she's a bobbin'," and the signalman jumped to the bridge and received the signal "Raise steam with all despatch." All night long signals passed back and forth. "Steam for four hours' notice" . . . "Steam for two hours' notice" . . . "Steam for one hour's notice", and this last meant "be ready to proceed to sea in a hurry". The crews were speculating as to "what was in the air".

At five o'clock on the Sunday morning they received the order to proceed to sea and fifteen minutes later they were following their flagship the *Arethusa* out of Harwich harbour. The day was just breaking cold and clear as the divisions of destroyers led by their light cruisers passed through the swept Channel and headed for sea, and the *Meteor*, having aboard the youngest Captain, was last ship of the line in her division.

They were ploughing along at 25 knots, dipping and curtsying into a nice long swell, when the arc-light aboard the flagship winked once again, and a moment or so later the *Meteor* increased speed and turned out of line. She was off on her own to carry out some investigation, the nature of which most of those aboard knew not a thing. But every man aboard could "feel" that something was about to happen, and they were not altogether surprised when the Quartermaster piped, "Away boarding-boat's crew."

The crew doubled down below, dressed, and buckled on their side arms. Each man had a bayonet, rifle, and ammunition. The officer and signal rating were armed with a naval type revolver and cutlass. Hardly had they dipped over the horizon and lost sight of their other ships than they sighted what they at first took to be an ordinary merchant ship, but as they closed her they saw she was painted white with a big red cross on the side. And as they drew closer still they were amazed to see she was flying the German flag as proud as Punch.

As soon as the speed slackened sufficiently the boarding-boat was dropped into the water and pulled over to the German ship. The destroyer increased speed and circled

around. As a precaution against attack from enemy submarines all men aboard the *Meteor* were kept closed up at action stations.

When the boat pulled alongside the German ship the officer and signalman climbed aboard up a Jacob's ladder, and acting on instruction tore down the wireless aerial and threw it overboard. This task completed, the boarding-boat returned, was hoisted to the davits, and the *Meteor* changed course and increased speed with the intention of catching up and taking her position with the rest of her flotilla. They had proceeded on their course for only a few minutes when they received a wireless signal telling them to return to the hospital ship and take her into Yarmouth.

The crew of the *Meteor* were wondering what it was all about, and there was no little speculation as to whether this ship would turn out to be another *Konigin Luise*, and they recalled mentally the fate which befell the *Amphion*.

They returned to the enemy ship and the boarding-boat's crew were convinced something was fishy as they saw the boarding officer dismantle the other ship's wireless-room and pass the instruments down into the boarding-boat. After the boarding-boat returned to the *Meteor* the latter signalled the hospital ship to follow her. When they neared the British coast the navigating officer was transferred from the *Meteor* to the German vessel, in order to pilot her through the protective mine-fields into Yarmouth Roads. Here they dropped the anchor. The name of that German ship was the *Ophelia*.

The Captain of the *Meteor* went ashore to report to the S.N.O. and was ordered to put an armed guard aboard the German ship, which was sent to Sheerness. There was a large number of German sailors in uniform aboard the hospital ship, as well as many more in civilian clothes, and they messed at opposite ends of the ship. The men amongst the armed guard could find out very little about this curious incident. They heard there had been a scrap off the Dutch coast, during which three German destroyers had been sent to the bottom of the North Sea (or German Ocean,

whichever way you like to have it), and some say the uniformed men were the survivors of these vessels. Others claimed the hospital ship was being used to transport submarine crews from Germany to the new base at Zeebrugge. Whatever the true explanation is, the Admiralty may deem it advisable to tell the world about it in the year 1999, but at the present time they "regret that they cannot give access to official records".

As far as my informant knows, the men aboard this German ship were interned. The *Meteor* returned to Harwich, but as there is no peace for the wicked or rest for the weary they were ordered to sea again and sailed at the chilly hour of 4.15 a.m. and shaped their course towards Heligoland.

Here is another piece of typical naval humour, which illustrates how everything was carried out with strict secrecy.

The destroyers pounded along all that day and picked up two ships carrying seaplanes. All the men felt excited and wondered what would happen at daylight. It's another air-raid stunt sure enough, they figured. The destroyers circled the seaplane-carriers at high speed while they were dropping the 'planes and picking up those which came back again. There is a great sensation experienced when aboard a destroyer pounding its way through the short choppy seas at full speed. The shock of the waves hitting the structure. The vibration of the engines . . . the uncanny darkness of the night, and the fact that everyone aboard realizes that only one split second may change a pitch-dark, silent night into a howling riot where searchlights and shell-fire create a general pandemonium. There is the feeling which comes from the knowledge that at any moment your ship may strike a mine ; but amongst all this, while you plug along knowing nothing of what it is all about, just before you arrive in harbour you receive a signal from the flagship which reads, "Be careful not to let anything leak out about our movements during the past forty-eight hours."

Said one man, "The officers undoubtedly knew where we went and what we were doing or hoped to accomplish,

but to the lower deck ratings the whole of the war was like groping through the ruins of an old castle, or an old factory, in the pitch darkness, never knowing from one moment to another if the next step you took might not plunge you into eternity. From my own point of view, I do not think the strain would have been half as hard on the men's nerves if they had known more about what they were doing and what they might expect. Taking the men 'by and large', they were a pretty good bunch of fellows, and they followed their officers blindly because it was their duty to do so ; but I'm telling you they would have felt better within themselves had they known a little more about what they were doing."

The newspapers report "No activity". Everything is at a dead issue. But November 4th, 1914, found the Duty Patrol plugging away towards the Hook of Holland. This particular evening they were crawling through a regular "pea-soup" fog. Cold . . . miserable . . . wet . . . the dank mists swirled about them like ghostly wraiths, and dripped off their sou'westers down the neckbands of their oilskins. The orders were that when the Maas Lightship was sighted the ships would turn to the North and head out to sea again. Darkness added its weight of sheer misery to the discomfort of all hands. A queer kind of cold, that wet cold. It made you feel as if the marrow inside your bones was freezing and swelling . . . swelling until it would burst. But there is no time to think of aches and pains when you creep like a sleuth into the gangsters' headquarters. You have just got to grope along, eyes and ears alert, waiting . . . waiting . . . seeing things . . . then when least expected it happens.

This November night they were looking for a lightship, and, expecting to run into the enemy, they . . . Well, we won't mention any names, but there must be a dozen or more men still living who can vouch for the truth of the following story.

Shortly after 8 p.m. the First Lieutenant had taken over the watch. The Captain of this particular destroyer went

below into the charthouse, located immediately under the bridge, to eat some sandwiches and have a drink of something warmer than "North Sea fog". He had hardly settled down when he heard the siren give three short blasts, the signal that the ships ahead were going astern. The Commander dropped everything and dashed up on the bridge again. The O.O.W. had stopped the engines. Out of the fog they saw the ship ahead come backing into them. They put their engines astern, and helped by the bump of the other vessel's propeller guard they gathered sternway. The other destroyers backed into them and for a few minutes everyone got mixed up together. It looked as if the British Navy was going to lose four perfectly good destroyers. Three of them, however, escaped without further trouble, but the destroyer I tell of stayed where she struck, and the engineer-officer came up and reported that the engines had been "brought up all standing" when they hit the obstruction or whatever it was they had hit.

The officers thought they had run foul of the wreckage of the *Hogue*, *Cressy*, and *Aboukir*. The other destroyers, having extracted themselves from immediate danger, went about their business. The destroyer which was still foul every now and again gave a ghastly sickening roll . . . next she would come pounding down on something solid and shiver as if with ague. It was pitch dark, and the fog was if anything thicker than ever. The Commander ordered, "On life-belts and prepare for eventualities." He went back into the charthouse to finish his sandwiches, when just as he took the first bite the gunner poked his head in the charthouse and said cheerfully, "Hit's alright, sir. . . . There's an 'otel on the starboard quarter."

The Commander went aft at once. Through a break in the fog he could make out an esplanade complete with lights, and the gunner's 'otel was a couple of hundred yards away. They were fast aground. They were cold and miserable . . . ashore was the gunner's hotel . . . warmth . . . and comfort . . . and internment for the duration of the war, because it was a Dutch place they had uninten-

tionally visited. But no ! . . . the path of duty never follows ease and comfort. It was about 9.30 p.m. at the time, and the Commander having finished his sandwiches and seen to it that the crew had "stowed their hatches with a bite to eat and a hot drink", the ship's company quietly and without commotion proceeded to carry out several routine evolutions. Their Commander warned them to show no lights and make not a single unnecessary sound. Officers and men working in the dark, drenched in the fog and spray, did the evolutions "Out bower anchor" . . . "Out stern anchor" . . . and did them successfully.

The evolution "Out bower anchor" means that the crew of the destroyer working in the pitch dark of a cold November night, with fog so thick that it laid on them like a wet clammy blanket, with spray lashing their half-frozen faces and fingers numb with cold, actually carried the heavy bower anchors several hundred feet out to sea where the water was deeper. They had to use their small boats to do this work, and having carried out the bower anchor and dropped it in a suitable position at the right angle, they started all over again and carried out the stern anchor. The destroyer by this time was listing over at an angle of 20 degrees. She had only seven feet of water under her bows and very little more under her stern, and she was heading for the gunner's hotel. With every heave of the tide and swell the stranded boat would bounce and shiver. The situation looked hopeless, but with true bulldog spirit the officers and men carried on.

Having got the anchors into position and securely embedded in the sand, they led the heavy wire cables to the capstans and started to heave the destroyer off the sandbank. It was a heart-breaking task. They could get only a few feet at a time. They had constantly to change over the heavy wires and let the bower wire in through the stern bollards, and take the wire attached to the stern anchor in through the for'ard leads to the capstan, in order to take advantage of angles and leverage. Inch by inch . . . foot by foot . . . they pulled and wriggled the ship into sufficient water so

she was afloat again, but they found by sounding around her that she was in a kind of basin with shallower water all around. More nerve-trying, tedious work, but using the lead and feeling their way blindly they discovered deeper water on the off-shore side of one of the sand-bars. The time was passing all too quickly. If they didn't escape while it was still dark there would be awkward questions from the Dutch authorities to answer, and possible internment. The Captain took a chance. He pulled his bows around, headed for the deeper water, and drove his command forward at full speed. She hit . . . shuddered and trembled . . . started forward again . . . the force of her engines drove her bows up, and she jumped the sand-bar like a steeplechase horse goes over a hedge. The moment she was clear they stopped the engines. They didn't know until they tried them out gingerly whether or not they had stripped off their propellers, but after trying her gently ahead and astern they decided they still had the screws on the shaftings.

If I wrote a whole book on this one episode alone, landlubbers wouldn't understand the work and risk involved. Seamen will give this particular crew credit for performing a very fine feat of seamanship under the most extraordinary and trying conditions possible to imagine. Before daylight they were making their way back to Sheerness, the nearest dry dock. Apart from shinning the paint off their bottom and burnishing their propeller-blades in the fine sand there was no serious damage done, and they rejoined their flotilla at Harwich and reported ready for duty.

The Captain telling the story said in conclusion, "The most extraordinary part of the whole thing was that My Lords were good enough on this occasion to let me off the usual Naval Court of Inquiry. I had experienced previously and survived one such ordeal."

## CHAPTER NINE

### *The Air Raid on Cuxhaven*

WHAT A THRILL IS EXPERIENCED when one thinks of the first real air raid carried out by "The Harwich Striking Force" on "objectives of military importance". Today, with the younger generation taking everything in aviation for granted, I cannot help but be grateful that I lived during the years we "feathered our wings". I am glad in a way that I was so young when the war broke out that today, twenty-four years afterwards, I am still in my early forties. To all those who blaze sky trails, do Trans-Atlantic and Trans-Pacific hops, let me say that, worthy as you may be of the honours conferred upon you, I honestly doubt if some of you would have so much as climbed into the cockpits of some of the flying-crates and flying-bathtubs which took part in the raid on Cuxhaven on Christmas Day, 1914.

It was a scream . . . it was a joke . . . it was absurd . . . it was crazy . . . it was everything that accounts for success. Do something outstanding and outlandish with suddenness and audacity and the chances are a thousand to one you'll get away with it, simply because nobody thought anyone else would be so crazy as to try that particular stunt . . . but don't go to the same well too often to drink, otherwise instead of getting refreshment you are liable to get poison. This may seem a little like rambling, but as the story progresses the reader will see what I mean.

We were so little war-minded in 1914 that after war had actually been declared some person (who at least could visualize the requirements of the immediate future better than others) suggested the Navy "take over" the

three cross-Channel steamers *Empress*, *Engadine*, and *Riviera*, which belonged to the South-Eastern and Chatham Railway Company, and convert them into seaplane-carriers.

You bird-men of today, try to picture these original models of what the navies of the world possess today. The only thing they had which other merchant ships had not was speed. So they built hangars on the after decks and turned them into seaplane-carriers. When they wanted to launch a birdie they stopped the ship, hooked the birdie on to a fall dangling from the end of a derrick, and then, by the Grace of the Lord and a lot of good management, they hoisted the birdie off the deck, swung it overboard, and lowered it into the water. Meanwhile the pilot prayed there were no enemy submarines in the vicinity who would be so unladylike as to take a pot shot at him while "caught with his pants down". Try to picture the fun they had hoisting out seaplanes on derricks when the sea was anything but smooth as a mill-pond. Remember that the cruising range of seaplanes in those days was only a couple of hundred miles, and they had to be taken right over to the enemy coast and released, so that they could fly to their objective and return, and the ships that released them had to stick around and pick them up again.

The boy who knocked a hornets' nest off the bough of a tree, and then stuck around to examine it and see what it was made of, had nothing on "The Harwich Striking Force" when they were detailed to act as nursemaids to our seaplane-carriers. Once more I would like to emphasize that it is one thing to work out a campaign in theory and another to carry it out under actual conditions of warfare.

The first air raid was timed for November 24th, and the Harwich Flotilla sailed with their aeroplane carriers to scout through the Bight of Heligoland. But during the night of the 23rd the weather changed. The wind and sea became rough, and it was necessary to send the seaplane-carriers back to port escorted by the destroyer flotillas. The three light cruisers *Arethusa*, *Undaunted*, and *Aurora* proceeded into enemy waters, and a destroyer which had missed the

[*Photos: Cmdr. C. L. A. Woollard, R.N. (Retd.), F.R.G.S., F.R.E.S.*

*Left.* QUARTER-DECK OF THE *Undaunted* AFTER THE SINKING OF FOUR GERMAN DESTROYERS ON OCTOBER 17, 1914. THE DESTROYERS *Lennox* AND *Lance* ARE IN THE BACKGROUND.

*Right.* LEADING-SEAMAN MILLS, OF THE *Undaunted*, WHO, ON CHRISTMAS DAY, 1914, SCORED THE FIRST HIT ON A ZEPPELIN EVER RECORDED. HE WAS AWARDED THE D.S.M.

[*Photo: Cmdr. C. L. A. Woollard, R.N. (Retd.), F.R.G.S., F.R.E.S.*

DAMAGE DONE TO *Undaunted* BY THE DESTROYER *Landrail* IN COLLISION ON MARCH 24, 1915. NOTE POSITION OF TWIN TORPEDO TUBES

signals joined up with them, like a lost pup looking for companionship.

It is safe to surmise that Admiral Beatty's battle cruisers, and probably the Grand Fleet, were hovering off in the distance waiting for something to happen, because the four ships belonging to "The Harwich Striking Force" proceeded right in towards Heligoland, and cruised about in full view of the Island fortress as brazen as you like, inviting the enemy ships to come out and fight. A couple of enemy destroyer flotillas did venture out, but they must have smelt a rat, because they didn't seem over anxious to accept the invitation. Our light cruisers went in still closer until the land guns on the Island opened fire, and sent their projectiles so uncomfortably close that our ships withdrew out of range. A few enemy 'planes took the air, but the bombs they dropped didn't register any hits, and the whole show frazzled out. I believe this was the only occasion during the war that the guns of Heligoland were fired against an enemy.

A month passed by without anything but regular routine, and Christmas Eve found all ships in harbour, their crews expecting a quiet and jovial Christmas. They made the necessary arrangements to ensure themselves the usual Yuletide cheer, but the "powers that be" thought otherwise.

A good many ships had landed their stewards to obtain the "extras" for Christmas Day, when the flagship *Arethusa* hoisted the signal "Raise steam with utmost despatch." Before noon nearly every ship in the harbour had steam up, and were following each other through the gates heading for sea. They sailed under sealed orders. It is the small things that make war hell. As some of the ships steamed out of harbour the crews could see their stewards standing on the landing-stage waving turkeys and geese which they had bought, but the nation was at war and the stewards and the good things were left behind.

We know now what we didn't know then. Our submarines had been sent into enemy waters ahead to form a

cordon around and about the enemy bases. The weather was fine and clear and the sea calm. "The Harwich Striking Force" proceeded into enemy waters. The seaplane-carriers stopped, and our destroyers circled around them at full speed to protect them from possible attack by enemy submarines while they were hoisting out their seaplanes. They succeeded in getting seven away, and the whole force was able to reform and proceed in extended order into the Bight of Heligoland, intending to rendezvous at a pre-arranged position about thirty miles away and pick up the seaplanes again three hours after they had taken off.

Our ships proceeded into the Bight, zigzagging to avoid possible attack by enemy submarines, but, as though our hawks had flushed their prey off their nests, two Zeppelins and several 'planes made their appearance and proceeded to bomb our ships. For three hours the weirdest fight went on. The enemy 'planes and Zeppelins tried to manœuvre into position over our ships and drop their "eggs" (they made some excellent shooting, but just couldn't quite score a hit), and the men of "The Harwich Striking Force" shot at them with everything they could point upwards towards the sky . . . rifles . . . machine-guns . . . guns with high angle fire. Those ships which were off at a distance even used their 4-inch and 6-inch guns at greatest elevation, and time-fused their shrapnel so they could gauge their range by the bursts. It all sounds ridiculous in view of the developments during the last twenty years, but nothing can detract from the credit of the officers and men who fought that battle. It was history in the making.

Some of the Zeppelins came so low that those on the decks of our ships could see the crews in the airships working to release the bombs. They peppered them with everything they had, and then put the helm hard over when they saw the bomb begin to fall. This unique battle lasted three hours, until the Zeppelins, having exhausted their bombs, returned to their hangars. But the battle wasn't over.

Three of our seven 'planes returned and were hoisted aboard. Three others were attacked by enemy 'planes, and

were later picked up by Lieutenant-Commander Nasmith, who commanded our submarine E–11. Flight-Lieutenant Hewlett, the pilot of the last 'plane, was rescued by a Dutch trawler when he was forced down into the sea short of fuel.

The part our submarines played in this fight I have already told in *By Guess and By God*, so I will only record what happened to "The Harwich Striking Force". As the squadron was steaming for home, escorting the seaplane-carriers, the *Empress* developed engine trouble, and she had to drop behind. H.M.S. *Undaunted* was detailed to stand by her, as another Zeppelin had appeared on the scene, and quite naturally picked the isolated *Empress* as her target. This Zeppelin (it turned out to be the L–6) decided to make sure of the *Empress*, so she manœuvred into position astern of the seaplane-carrier and, regulating her speed to that of her intended victim, proceeded to drop her "eggs". The *Empress* zigzagged like a snipe, but she was very nearly hit by one bomb. The *Undaunted* took up her position half a mile ahead of the *Empress* and proceeded to fire shrapnel at the enemy airship. Incredible as it may seem, Leading Seaman Mills, who was gun-layer of the after 6-inch gun aboard the *Undaunted*, actually made a hit, and put sixteen holes in the airship. He was the first man ever to hit a Zeppelin in action with surface ships, and he made her turn round and beat it for home.

What our seaplanes accomplished it is difficult to say. Some have it that they demolished a gasometer ; others that they hit several places of military importance. What I do know, however, is that one of the pilots admitted afterwards, "The enemy were after us hot and heavy. My machine-gun was hit several times. I saw some sheds which looked like bathing-machines, or they might have been churches for all I know. . . . I let go my bombs and got the hell out of it."

A member of the mess asked, "Are you sure that was Cuxhaven ?" to which question the airman replied : "I told you I got the hell out of it . . . do you think I stopped to read the perishing name on the station ?"

Before we conclude the chapter on the first naval air raid of the war, and the first battle in which surface ships and airships were engaged, it is just as well to record that Commodore Tyrwhitt (probably thinking of the turkeys, geese, and other good things they had left behind when they put to sea) signalled his ships at the height of the action, "I wish all ships a merry Christmas."

## CHAPTER TEN

*Naval Despatches—Engagement off Heligoland*
*On Friday, August 28th, 1914.*
*(Published in the Supplement to the "London Gazette",*
*No. 28948 of October 23rd, 1914.)*

Admiralty,
October 21st, 1914.

The following despatches have been received from Vice-Admiral (Acting) Sir David Beatty, K.C.B., M.V.O., D.S.O., H.M.S. *Lion*; Rear-Admiral Arthur H. Christian, M.V.O., H.M.S. *Euryalus*; Commodore Reginald Y. Tyrwhitt, Commodore (T), H.M.S. *Arethusa*; and Commodore Roger J. B. Keyes, C.B., M.V.O., Commodore (S), reporting the engagement off Heligoland on Friday, August 28th.

A memorandum by the Director of the Air Department, Admiralty, is annexed.

H.M.S. *Lion*,
September 1st, 1914.

Sir,

I have the honour to report that on Thursday, August 27th, at 5 a.m., I proceeded with the First Battle Cruiser Squadron and First Light Cruiser Squadron in company to rendezvous with the Rear-Admiral *Invincible*.

At 4 a.m., August 28th, the movements of the flotillas commenced as previously arranged, the Battle Cruiser Squadron and Light Cruiser Squadron supporting. The Rear-Admiral *Invincible* with *New Zealand* and four destroyers, having joined my flag, the squadron passed through the prearranged rendezvous.

At 8.10 a.m. I received a signal from the Commodore (T) informing me that the flotilla was in action with the enemy. This was presumably in the vicinity of their pre-arranged rendezvous. From this time until 11 a.m. I remained about the vicinity ready to support as necessary, intercepting various signals, which contained no information on which I could act.

At 11 a.m. the squadron was attacked by three submarines. The attack was frustrated by rapid manœuvring and the four destroyers were ordered to attack them. Shortly after 11 a.m., various signals having been received indicating that the Commodore (T) and Commodore (S) were both in need of assistance, I ordered the Light Cruiser Squadron to support the torpedo flotillas.

Later I received a signal from the Commodore (T) stating that he had been attacked by a large cruiser, and a further signal informing me that he was being hard pressed and asking for assistance. The Captain (D), First Flotilla, also signalled that he was in need of help.

From the foregoing the situation appeared to me critical. The flotillas had advanced only ten miles since 8 a.m., and were only about twenty-five miles from two enemy bases on their flank and rear respectively. Commodore Goodenough had detached two of his light cruisers to assist some destroyers earlier in the day, and these had not yet rejoined. (They rejoined at 2.30 p.m.) As the reports indicated the presence of many enemy ships—one a large cruiser—I considered that his force might not be strong enough to deal with the situation sufficiently rapidly, so at 11.30 a.m. the battle cruisers turned to E.S.E. and worked up to full speed. It was evident that to be of any value the support must be overwhelming and carried out at the highest speed possible.

I had not lost sight of the risk of submarines, and possible sortie in force from the enemy's base, especially in view of the mist to the south-east.

Our high speed, however, made submarine attack difficult, and the smoothness of the sea made their detection comparatively easy. I considered that we were powerful

enough to deal with any sortie except by a battle squadron, which was unlikely to come out in time, provided our stroke was sufficiently rapid.

At 12.15 p.m. *Fearless* and First Flotilla were sighted retiring west. At the same time the Light Cruiser Squadron was observed to be engaging an enemy ship ahead. They appeared to have her beat.

I then steered N.E. to sounds of firing ahead, and at 12.30 p.m. sighted *Arethusa* and Third Flotilla retiring to the westward engaging a cruiser of the *Kolberg* class on our port bow. I steered to cut her off from Heligoland, and at 12.37 p.m. opened fire. At 12.42 p.m. the enemy turned to N.E., and we chased at twenty-seven knots.

At 12.56 p.m. sighted and engaged a two-funnelled cruiser ahead. *Lion* fired two salvoes at her, which took effect, and she disappeared into the mist, burning furiously and in a sinking condition. In view of the mist and that she was steering at high speed at right angles to *Lion*, who was herself steaming at twenty-eight knots, the *Lion's* firing was very creditable.

Our destroyers had reported the presence of floating mines to the eastward, and I considered it inadvisable to pursue her. It was also essential that the squadron should remain concentrated, and I accordingly ordered a withdrawal. The battle cruisers turned north and circled to port to complete the destruction of the vessel first engaged. She was sighted again at 1.25 p.m. steaming S.E. with colours still flying. *Lion* opened fire with two turrets, and at 1.35 p.m., after receiving two salvoes, she sank.

The four attached destroyers were sent to pick up survivors, but I deeply regret that they subsequently reported that they searched the area but found none.

At 1.40 p.m. the battle cruisers turned to the northward, and *Queen Mary* was again attacked by a submarine. The attack was avoided by the use of the helm. *Lowestoft* was also unsuccessfully attacked. The battle cruisers covered the retirement until nightfall. By 6 p.m., the retirement having been well executed and all destroyers accounted for, I

altered course, spread the light cruisers, and swept northwards in accordance with the Commander-in-Chief's orders. At 7.45 p.m. I detached *Liverpool* to Rosyth with German prisoners, seven officers and seventy-nine men, survivors from *Mainz*. No further incident occurred.

I have the honour to be, sir,
Your obedient servant,
(Signed) DAVID BEATTY.
Vice-Admiral.

The Secretary of the Admiralty.

H.M.S. *Euryalus*,
September 28th, 1914.

Sir,

I have the honour to report that in accordance with your orders a reconnaissance in force was carried out in the Heligoland Bight on August 28th, with the object of attacking the enemy's light cruisers and destroyers.

The forces under my orders (viz. the cruiser force, under Rear-Admiral H. H. Campbell, C.V.O., *Euryalus*, *Amethyst*, First and Third Destroyer Flotillas, and the submarines) took up the positions assigned to them on the evening of August 27th, and, in accordance with directions given, proceeded during the night to approach the Heligoland Bight.

The cruiser force under Rear-Admiral Campbell, with *Euryalus* (my flagship) and *Amethyst*, was stationed to intercept any enemy vessel chased to the westward. At 4.30 p.m. on August 28th these cruisers, having proceeded to the eastward, fell in with *Lurcher* and three other destroyers, and the wounded and prisoners in these vessels were transferred in boats to *Bacchante* and *Cressy*, which left for the Nore. *Amethyst* took *Laurel* in tow, and at 9.30 p.m. *Hogue* was detached to take *Arethusa* in tow. This latter is referred to in

Commodore R. Y. Tyrwhitt's report, and I quite concur in his remarks as to the skill and rapidity with which this was done in the dark with no lights permissible.

Commodore Reginald Y. Tyrwhitt was in command of the destroyer flotillas, and his report is enclosed herewith. His attack was delivered with great skill and gallantry, and he was most ably seconded by Captain William F. Blunt, in *Fearless*, and the officers in command of the destroyers, who handled their vessels in a manner worthy of the best traditions of the British Navy.

Commodore Roger J. B. Keyes, in *Lurcher*, had on August 27th escorted some submarines into positions allotted to them in the immediate vicinity of the enemy's coast. On the morning of August 28th, in company with *Firedrake*, he searched the area to the southward of the battle cruisers for the enemy's submarines, and subsequently, having been detached, was present at the sinking of the German cruiser *Mainz*, when he gallantly proceeded alongside her and rescued 220 of her crew, many of whom were wounded. Subsequently he escorted *Laurel* and *Liberty* out of action, and kept them company until Rear-Admiral Campbell's cruisers were sighted.

As regards the submarine officers, I would specially mention the names of :

(*a*) Lieutenant-Commander Ernest W. Leir. His coolness and resource in rescuing the crews of the *Goshawk's* and *Defender's* boats at a critical time of the action were admirable.

(*b*) Lieutenant-Commander Cecil P. Talbot. In my opinion the bravery and resource of the officers in command of submarines since the war commenced are worthy of the highest commendation.

I have the honour to be, sir,
Your obedient servant,
(Signed) A. H. CHRISTIAN.
Rear-Admiral.

The Secretary, Admiralty.

H.M.S. *Lowestoft.*
September 26th, 1914.

Sir,

I have the honour to report that at 5 a.m. on Thursday, August 27th, in accordance with orders received from their Lordships, I sailed in *Arethusa* in company with the First and Third Flotillas, except *Hornet*, *Tigress*, *Hydra*, and *Loyal*, to carry out the prearranged operations. H.M.S. *Fearless* joined the flotilla at sea that afternoon.

At 6.53 a.m. on Friday, August 28th, an enemy's destroyer was sighted, and was chased by the 4th Division of the Third Flotilla.

From 7.20 to 7.57 a.m. *Arethusa* and the Third Flotilla were engaged with numerous destroyers and torpedo boats which were making for Heligoland ; course was altered to port to cut them off.

Two cruisers, with four and two funnels respectively, were sighted on the port bow at 7.57 a.m., the nearest of which was engaged. *Arethusa* received a heavy fire from both German cruisers and several destroyers until 8.15 a.m., when the four-funnelled cruiser transferred her fire to *Fearless.*

Close action was continued with the two-funnelled cruiser on converging courses until 8.25 a.m., when a 6-inch projectile from *Arethusa* wrecked the fore bridge of the enemy, who at once turned away in the direction of Heligoland, which was sighted slightly on the starboard bow at about the same time.

All ships were at once ordered to turn to the westward, and shortly afterwards speed was reduced to twenty knots.

During this action *Arethusa* had been hit many times, and was considerably damaged ; only one 6-inch gun remained in action, all other guns and torpedo tubes having been temporarily disabled.

Lieutenant Eric W. P. Westmacott (signal officer) was killed at my side during this action. I cannot refrain from adding that he carried out his duties calmly and collectedly, and was of the greatest assistance to me.

A fire occurred opposite No. 2 gun port side, caused by a shell exploding some ammunition, resulting in a terrific blaze for a short period, and leaving the deck burning. This was very promptly dealt with and extinguished by Chief Petty Officer Frederick W. Wrench, O.N. 158630.

The flotillas were reformed in divisions and proceeded at twenty knots. It was noticed that *Arethusa's* speed had been reduced.

*Fearless* reported that the 3rd and 5th Divisions of the First Flotilla had sunk the German Commander's destroyer and that two boats' crews belonging to *Defender* had been left behind, as our destroyers had been fired upon by a German cruiser during their act of mercy in saving the survivors of the German destroyer.

At 10 a.m., hearing that Commodore (S) in *Lurcher* and *Firedrake* was being chased by light cruisers, I proceeded to his assistance with *Fearless* and the First Flotilla until 10.37 a.m., when, having received no news and being in the vicinity of Heligoland, I ordered the ships in company to turn to the westward.

All guns except two 4-inch were again in working order, and the upper deck supply of ammunition was replenished.

At 10.55 a.m. a four-funnelled German cruiser was sighted, and opened a very heavy fire at about eleven o'clock.

Our position being somewhat critical, I ordered *Fearless* to attack, and the First Flotilla to attack with torpedoes, which they proceeded to do with great spirit. The cruiser at once turned away, disappeared in the haze, and evaded the attack.

About ten minutes later the same cruiser appeared on our starboard quarter. Opened fire on her with both 6-inch guns ; *Fearless* also engaged her, and one division of destroyers attacked her with torpedoes without success.

The state of affairs and our position was then reported to the Admiral Commanding Battle Cruiser Squadron.

We received a very severe and almost accurate fire from this cruiser ; salvo after salvo was falling between ten and thirty yards short, but not a single shell struck ;

two torpedoes were also fired at us, being well directed but short.

The cruiser was badly damaged by *Arethusa's* 6-inch guns and a splendidly directed fire from *Fearless*, and she shortly afterwards turned away in the direction of Heligoland.

Proceeded, and four minutes later sighted the three-funnelled cruiser *Mainz*. She endured a heavy fire from *Arethusa* and *Fearless* and many destroyers. After an action of approximately twenty-five minutes she was seen to be sinking by the head, her engines stopped, besides being on fire.

At this moment the Light Cruiser Squadron appeared, and they very speedily reduced the *Mainz* to a condition which must have been indescribable.

I then recalled *Fearless* and the destroyers, and ordered cease fire.

We then exchanged broadsides with a large four-funnelled cruiser on the starboard quarter at long range, without visible effect.

The Battle Cruiser Squadron now arrived, and I pointed out this cruiser to the Admiral Commanding, and was shortly afterwards informed by him that the cruiser in question had been sunk and another set on fire.

The weather during the day was fine, sea calm, but visibility poor—not more than three miles at any time when the various actions were taking place—and was such that ranging and spotting were rendered difficult.

I then proceeded with fourteen destroyers of the Third Flotilla and nine of the First Flotilla.

*Arethusa's* speed was about six knots until 7 p.m., when it was impossible to proceed any farther, and fires were drawn in all boilers except two, and assistance called for.

At 9.30 p.m. Captain Wilmot S. Nicholson, of the *Hogue*, took my ship in tow in a most seamanlike manner, and, observing that the night was pitch dark, and the only lights showing were two small hand lanterns, I consider his action was one which deserves special notice from their Lordships.

I would also specially recommend Lieutenant-Commander Arthur P. N. Thorowgood, of *Arethusa*, for the able manner he prepared the ship for being towed in the dark.

H.M. ship, under my command, was then towed to the Nore, arriving at 5 p.m. on August 29th. Steam was then available for slow speed, and the ship was able to proceed to Chatham under her own steam.

I beg again to call attention to the services rendered by Captain W. F. Blunt, of H.M.S. *Fearless*, and the Commanding Officers of the destroyers of the First and Third Flotillas, whose gallant attacks on the German cruisers at critical moments undoubtedly saved *Arethusa* from more severe punishment and possible capture.

I cannot adequately express my satisfaction and pride at the spirit and ardour of my officers and ship's company, who carried out their orders with the greatest alacrity under the most trying conditions, especially in view of the fact that the ship, newly built, had not been forty-eight hours out of the dockyard before she was in action.

It is difficult to specially pick out individuals, but the following came under my special observation :

H.M.S. *Arethusa*

Lieutenant-Commander Arthur P. N. Thorowgood, First Lieutenant, and in charge of the After Control.

Lieutenant-Commander Ernest K. Arbuthnot (G), in charge of the Fore Control.

Sub-Lieutenant Clive A. Robinson, who worked the range-finder throughout the entire action with extraordinary coolness.

Assistant Paymaster Kenneth E. Badcock, my secretary, who attended me on the bridge throughout the entire action.

Mr. James D. Godfrey, Gunner (T), who was in charge of the torpedo tubes.

The following men were specially noted :

Armourer Arthur F. Hayes, O.N. 342026 (Ch.).

Second Sick-Berth Steward, George Trolley, O.N. M.296 (Ch.).

Chief Yeoman of Signals Albert Fox, O.N. 194656 (Po.), on fore bridge during entire action.

Chief Petty Officer Frederick W. Wrench, O.N. 158630 (Ch.), for ready resource in extinguishing fire caused by explosion of cordite.

Private Thomas Millington, R.M.L.I., No. Ch. 17417.

Private William J. Beirne, R.M.L.I., No. Ch. 13540.

First Writer Albert W. Stone, O.N. 346080 (Po.).

I also beg to record the services rendered by the following officers and men of H.M. ships under my orders :

### H.M.S. *Fearless*

Mr. Robert M. Taylor, Gunner, for coolness in action under heavy fire.

The following officers also displayed great resource and energy in effecting repairs to *Fearless* after her return to harbour, and they were ably seconded by the whole of their staffs :

Engineer Lieutenant-Commander Charles de F. Messervy, Mr. William Morrissey, carpenter.

### H.M.S. *Goshawk*

Commander the Hon. Herbert Meade, who took his division into action with great coolness and nerve, and was instrumental in sinking the German destroyer V–187 and, with the boats of his division, saved the survivors in a most chivalrous manner.

### H.M.S. *Ferret*

Commander Geoffrey Mackworth, who, with his division, most gallantly seconded Commander Meade of *Goshawk*.

## H.M.S. *Laertes*

Lieutenant-Commander Malcolm L. Goldsmith, whose ship was seriously damaged, taken in tow, and towed out of action by *Fearless*.

Engineer Lieutenant-Commander Alexander Hill, for repairing steering-gear and engines under fire.

Sub-Lieutenant George H. Faulkner, who continued to fight his gun after being wounded.

Mr. Charles Powell, Acting Boatswain, O.N. 209388, who was gun-layer of the centre gun, which made many hits. He behaved very coolly, and set a good example when getting in tow and clearing away the wreckage after the action.

Edward Naylor, Petty Officer, Torpedo Gunner's mate, O.N. 189136, who fired a torpedo which the Commanding Officer of *Laertes* reports undoubtedly hit the *Mainz* and so helped materially to put her out of action.

Stephen Pritchard, Stoker Petty Officer, O.N. 285152, who very gallantly dived into the cabin-flat immediately after a shell had exploded there and worked a fire-hose.

Frederick Pierce, Stoker Petty Officer, O.N. 307943, who was on watch in the engine-room and behaved with conspicuous coolness and resource when a shell exploded in No. 2 boiler.

## H.M.S. *Laurel*

Commander Frank F. Rose, who most ably commanded his vessel throughout the early part of the action, and, after having been wounded in both legs, remained on the bridge until 6 p.m., displaying great devotion to duty.

Lieutenant Charles R. Peploe, First Lieutenant, who took command after Commander Rose was wounded, and continued the action till its close, bringing his destroyer out in an able and gallant manner under most trying conditions.

Engineer Lieutenant-Commander Edward H. T. Meeson, who behaved with great coolness during the action, and steamed the ship out of action, although she had been very severely damaged by explosion of her own lyddite, by which the after funnel was nearly demolished. He subsequently assisted to carry out repairs to the vessel.

Sam Palmer, Leading Seaman (G.L.2), O.N. 179529, who continued to fight his gun until the end of the action, although severely wounded in the leg.

Albert Edmund Sellens, Able Seaman (L.T.O.), O.N. 217245, who was stationed at the fore torpedo tubes ; he remained at his post throughout the entire action, although wounded in the arm, and then rendered first aid in a very able manner before being attended to himself.

George H. Sturdy, Chief Stoker, O.N. 285547, and Alfred Britton, Stoker Petty Officer, O.N. 289893, who both showed great coolness in putting out a fire near the centre gun after an explosion had occurred there ; several lyddite shells were lying in the immediate vicinity.

William R. Boiston, Engine-Room Artificer, 3rd Class, O.N. M. 1369, who showed great ability and coolness in taking charge of the after boiler-room during the action, when an explosion blew in the after funnel and a shell carried away pipes and seriously damaged the main steam pipe.

William H. Gorst, Stoker Petty Officer, O.N. 305616 ; Edward Crane, Stoker Petty Officer, O.N. 307275 ; Harry Wilfred Hawkes, Stoker, 1st Class, O.N. K. 12086 ; John W. Bateman, Stoker, 1st Class, O.N. K. 12100. These men were stationed in the after boiler-room and conducted themselves with great coolness during the action, when an explosion blew in the after funnel, and a shell carried away pipes and seriously damaged the main steam pipe.

## H.M.S. *Liberty*

The late Lieutenant-Commander Nigel K. W. Barttelot commanded the *Liberty* with great skill and gallantry

throughout the action. He was a most promising and able officer, and I consider his death is a great loss to the Navy.

Engineer Lieutenant-Commander Frank A. Butler, who showed much resource in effecting repairs during the action.

Lieutenant Henry E. Horan, First Lieutenant, who took command after the death of Lieutenant-Commander Barttelot and brought his ship out of action in an extremely able and gallant manner under most trying conditions.

Mr. Harry Morgan, Gunner (T), who carried out his duties with exceptional coolness under fire.

Chief Petty Officer James Samuel Beadle, O.N. 171735, who remained at his post at the wheel for over an hour after being wounded in the kidneys.

John Galvin, Stoker Petty Officer, O.N. 279946, who took entire charge under the Engineer Officer of the party, who stopped leaks and accomplished his task, although working up to his chest in water.

## H.M.S. *Laforey*

Mr. Ernest Roper, Chief Gunner, who carried out his duties with exceptional coolness under fire.

I have the honour to be, sir,
Your obedient servant,
(Signed) R. Y. Tyrwhitt.
Commodore (T).

H.M.S. *Maidstone.*
October 17th, 1914.

Sir,

In compliance with their Lordships' directions, I have the honour to report as follows upon the services performed by submarines since the commencement of hostilities :

Three hours after the outbreak of war, submarines E–6 (Lieutenant-Commander Cecil P. Talbot) and E–8 (Lieutenant-Commander Francis H. H. Goodhart) proceeded

unaccompanied to carry out a reconnaissance in the Heligoland Bight. These two vessels returned with useful information and had the privilege of being the pioneers on a service which is attended with some risk.

During the transportation of the Expeditionary Force, the *Lurcher* and *Firedrake* and all the submarines of the Eighth Submarine Flotilla occupied positions from which they could have attacked the High Seas Fleet had it emerged to dispute the passage of our transports. This patrol was maintained day and night without relief, until the personnel of our Army had been transported and all chance of effective interference had disappeared.

These submarines have since been incessantly employed on the enemy's coast in the Heligoland Bight and elsewhere, and have obtained much valuable information regarding the composition and movement of his patrols. They have occupied his waters and reconnoitred his anchorages, and, while so engaged, have been subjected to skilful and well-executed anti-submarine tactics, hunted for hours at a time by torpedo-craft, and attacked by gunfire and torpedoes.

At midnight on August 26th I embarked in the *Lurcher* and, in company with *Firedrake* and submarines D–2, D–8, E–4, E–5, E–6, E–7, E–8, and E–9 of the Eighth Submarine Flotilla, proceeded to take part in the operations in the Heligoland Bight arranged for August 28th. The destroyers scouted for the submarines until nightfall on the 27th, when the latter proceeded independently to take up various positions from which they could co-operate with the destroyer flotillas on the following morning.

At daylight on August 28th the *Lurcher* and *Firedrake* searched the area through which the battle cruisers were to advance for hostile submarines, and then proceeded towards Heligoland in the wake of submarines E–6, E–7, and E–8, which were exposing themselves with the object of inducing the enemy to chase them to the westward.

On approaching Heligoland the visibility, which had been very good to seaward, reduced to 5000 to 6000 yards,

and this added considerably to the anxieties and responsibilities of the Commanding Officers of submarines, who handled their vessels with coolness and judgment in an area which was necessarily occupied by friends as well as foes.

Low visibility and calm sea are the most unfavourable conditions under which submarines can operate, and no opportunity occurred of closing with the enemy's cruisers to within torpedo-range.

Lieutenant-Commander Ernest W. Leir, commanding submarine E–4, witnessed the sinking of the German torpedo-boat destroyer V–187 through his periscope, and, observing a cruiser of the *Stettin* class close and open fire on the British destroyers which had lowered their boats to pick up the survivors, he proceeded to attack the cruiser, but she altered course before he could get within range. After covering the retirement of our destroyers, which had had to abandon their boats, he returned to the latter and embarked a Lieutenant and nine men of *Defender*, who had been left behind. The boats also contained two officers and eight men of V–187, who were unwounded, and eighteen men who were badly wounded. As he could not embark the latter, Lieutenant-Commander Leir left one of the officers and six unwounded men to navigate the British boats back to Heligoland. Before leaving he saw that they were provided with water, biscuit, and a compass. One German officer and two men were made prisoners of war.

Lieutenant-Commander Leir's action in remaining on the surface in the vicinity of the enemy, and in a visibility which would have placed his vessel within easy gun-range of an enemy appearing out of the mist, was altogether admirable.

This enterprising and gallant officer took part in the reconnaissance which supplied the information on which these operations were based, and I beg to submit his name and that of Lieutenant-Commander Talbot, the Commanding Officer of E–6, who exercised patience, judgment, and skill in a dangerous position, for the favourable consideration of their Lordships.

On September 13th E–9 (Lieutenant-Commander Max K. Horton) torpedoed and sank the German light cruiser *Hela* six miles south of Heligoland.

A number of destroyers were evidently called to the scene after E–9 had delivered her attack, and these hunted her for several hours.

On September 14th, in accordance with his orders, Lieutenant-Commander Horton examined the outer anchorage of Heligoland, a service attended by considerable risk.

On September 25th submarine E–6 (Lieutenant-Commander C. P. Talbot), while diving, fouled the moorings of a mine laid by the enemy. On rising to the surface she weighed the mine and sinker ; the former was securely fixed between the hydroplane and its guard ; fortunately, however, the horns of the mine were pointed outboard. The weight of the sinker made it a difficult and dangerous matter to lift the mine clear without exploding it. After half an hour's patient work this was effected by Lieutenant Frederick A. P. Williams-Freeman and Able Seaman Ernest Randall Cremer, O.N. 214235, and the released mine descended to its original depth.

On October 6th E–9 (Lieutenant-Commander Max K. Horton), when patrolling off the Ems, torpedoed and sank the enemy's destroyer S–126.

The enemy's torpedo craft pursued tactics which, in connection with their shallow draft, made them exceedingly difficult to attack with torpedo, and Lieutenant-Commander Horton's success was the result of much patient and skilful zeal. He is a most enterprising submarine officer, and I beg to submit his name for favourable consideration.

Lieutenant Charles M. S. Chapman, the Second in Command of E–9, is also deserving of credit.

Against an enemy whose capital vessels have never, and light cruisers have seldom, emerged from their fortified harbours, opportunities of delivering submarine attacks have necessarily been few, and on one occasion only, prior to September 13th, has one of our submarines been within torpedo-range of a cruiser during daylight hours.

During the exceptionally heavy westerly gales which prevailed between September 14th and 21st the position of the submarines on a lee shore within a few miles of the enemy's coast was an unpleasant one.

The short, steep seas which accompany westerly gales in the Heligoland Bight made it difficult to keep the conning tower hatches open. There was no rest to be obtained, and even when cruising at a depth of sixty feet the submarines were rolling considerably, and pumping—i.e. vertically moving about twenty feet.

I submit that it was creditable to the Commanding Officers that they should have maintained their stations under such conditions.

Service in the Heligoland Bight is keenly sought after by the Commanding Officers of the Eighth Submarine Flotilla, and they have all shown daring and enterprise in the execution of their duties. These officers have unanimously expressed to me their admiration of the cool and gallant behaviour of the officers and men under their command. They are, however, of the opinion that it is impossible to single out individuals when all have performed their duties so admirably, and in this I concur.

The following submarines have been in contact with the enemy during these operations :

D–1 (Lieutenant-Commander Archibald D. Cochrane).
D–2 (Lieutenant-Commander Arthur G. Jameson).
D–3 (Lieutenant-Commander Edward G. Boyle).
D–5 (Lieutenant-Commander Godfrey Herbert).
E–4 (Lieutenant-Commander Ernest W. Leir).
E–5 (Lieutenant-Commander Charles S. Benning).
E–6 (Lieutenant-Commander Cecil P. Talbot).
E–7 (Lieutenant-Commander Ferdinand E. B. Feilmann).
E–9 (Lieutenant-Commander Max K. Horton).

I have the honour to be, sir,
Your obedient servant,
(Signed) Roger Keyes.
Commodore (S).

MEMORANDUM BY CAPTAIN MURRAY F. SUETER, C.B., R.N., DIRECTOR OF THE AIR DEPARTMENT, ADMIRALTY

Commander Charles R. Samson, R.N., was in command of the Aeroplane and Armoured Motor Support of the Royal Naval Air Service (Naval Wing) at Dunkerque, between the dates September 1st to October 5th.

During this period several notable air reconnaissances were made, and skirmishes took place. Of these, particular mention may be made of the aeroplane attack on September 4th on four enemy cars and forty men, on which occasion several bombs were dropped ; and of the successful skirmishes at Cassel on September 4th, Savy on September 12th, Aniche on September 22nd, Orchies on September 23rd.

On September 22nd Flight-Lieutenant C. H. Collet, of the Royal Naval Air Service (Naval Wing of the Royal Flying Corps), flying a Sopwith tractor biplane, made a long flight and a successful attack on the German Zeppelin airship shed at Dusseldorf.

Lieutenant Collet's feat is notable—gliding down from 6000 feet, the last 1500 feet in mist, he finally came in sight of the airship shed at a height of 400 feet, only a quarter of a mile away from it.

Flight-Lieutenant Marix, acting under the orders of Squadron-Commander Spenser Grey, carried out a successful attack on the Dusseldorf airship shed during the afternoon of October 8th. From a height of 600 feet he dropped two bombs on the shed and flames 500 feet high were seen within thirty seconds. The roof of the shed was also seen to collapse.

Lieutenant Marix's machine was under heavy fire from rifles and mitrailleuse and was five times hit whilst making the attack.

Squadron-Commander Spenser Grey, whilst in charge of a flight of naval aeroplanes at Antwerp, penetrated during a $3\frac{3}{4}$ hours' flight into the enemy's country as far as Cologne

on October 8th. He circled the city under fire at 600 feet and discharged his bombs on the military railway station. Considerable damage was done.
*October 11th, 1914.*

## CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

Lord Chamberlain's Office,
St. James's Palace,
October 21st, 1914.

The King has been graciously pleased to give orders for the following appointment to the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, in recognition of the services of the undermentioned officer mentioned in the foregoing despatches.

*To be an Ordinary Member of the Military Division of the 3rd Class or Companion:*

Captain Reginald Yorke Tyrwhitt (Commodore, 2nd Class), Royal Navy.

Admiralty,
October 21st, 1914.

The King has been graciously pleased to give orders for the following appointments to the Distinguished Service Order, and for the award of the Distinguished Service Cross (late Conspicuous Service Cross), in respect of the undermentioned officers in recognition of their services mentioned in the foregoing despatches.

*To be Companion of the Distinguished Order:*

Captain William Frederick Blunt.
Commander the Hon. Herbert Meade.
Commander Frank Forester Rose.
Commander Charles Rumney Samson.

Lieutenant-Commander Max Kennedy Horton.
Lieutenant Frederick Arthur Peere Williams-Freeman.
Squadron-Commander Spenser Douglas Adair Grey.
Flight-Lieutenant Reginald Lennox George Marix.
Lieutenant Charles Herbert Collet, Royal Marine Artillery.

*To receive the Distinguished Service Cross (late Conspicuous Service Cross) :*

Lieutenant Henry Edward Horan.
Lieutenant Charles Manners Sutton Chapman.
Lieutenant Charles Reid Peploe.
Chief Gunner Ernest Roper.
Gunner Robert Mitchell Taylor.
Gunner James Douglas Godfrey.
Gunner Harry Morgan.
Acting Boatswain Charles Powell.

The following promotions in His Majesty's Fleet have been made in recognition of the services mentioned.

*To be promoted to Commander :*

Lieutenant-Commander Malcolm Lennox Goldsmith.
Lieutenant-Commander Ernest William Leir.
Lieutenant-Commander Cecil Ponsonby Talbot.

*To be promoted to Lieutenant :*

Sub-Lieutenant Clive Askew Robinson.
Sub-Lieutenant George Haines Faulkner.

The following officer has been noted for early promotion.

Lieutenant-Commander Max Kennedy Horton.

The following awards have also been made.

*To receive the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal:*

Ernest Randall Cremer, Able Seaman, O.N. 214235.

*To receive the Distinguished Service Medal:*

Ernest Edward Stevens, Chief Engine Room Artificer (1st Class), O.N. 269451.

Arthur Cecil Smith, Acting Chief Engine Room Artificer (2nd Class), O.N. 270627.

Albert Fox, Chief Yeoman of Signals, O.N. 194656.

Frederick William Walter Wrench, Chief Petty Officer, O.N. 158630.

George Henry Sturdy, Chief Stoker, O.N. 285547.

Edward Charles Taylor, Chief Stoker, O.N. 283225.

James William Armstrong, Engine Room Artificer (1st Class), O.N. 270451.

William Rochester Boiston, Engine Room Artificer (3rd Class), O.N. M. 1369.

James Samuel Beadle, Acting Chief Petty Officer, O.N. 171733.

Edward Naylor, Petty Officer, O.N. 189136.

Arthur Hiscock, Petty Officer, O.N. 191423.

Alfred George Antram, Petty Officer, O.N. 223207.

Harry Weate, Petty Officer, O.N. 174893.

Stephen Pritchard, Stoker Petty Officer, O.N. 285152.

Frederick Pierce, Stoker Petty Officer, O.N. 307943.

Alfred Britton, Stoker Petty Officer, O.N. 289893.

John Galvin, Stoker Petty Officer, O.N. 279946.

Arthur Fred Hayes, Armourer, O.N. 342026.

Frederick Charles Langridge, Stoker (1st Class), O.N. K. 6765.

Sam Palmer, Leading Seaman, O.N. 179529.

William Arthur McGill, Leading Seaman, O.N. 217484.

Albert Edmund Sellens, Able Seaman, O.N. 217245.

Henry Hurlock, Able Seaman, O.N. 238126.

*Admiralty,*
*October 21st, 1914.*

# COMBINED OPERATIONS OF H.M. SHIPS AND NAVAL SEAPLANES

## On December 25th, 1914.

*(Published in the Supplement to the "London Gazette" No. 29076 of February 19th, 1915.)*

Admiralty Memorandum on the combined operations of H.M. Ships and Naval Seaplanes on December 25th, 1914.

On December 25th, 1914, an air reconnaissance of the Heligoland Bight, including Cuxhaven, Heligoland, and Wilhelmshaven, was made by naval aeroplanes, and the opportunity was taken at the same time of attacking with bombs points of military importance. The reconnaissance involved combined operations by light cruisers, destroyers, and seaplane-carriers, under Commodore Reginald Y. Tyrwhitt, C.B., and submarines acting under the orders of Commodore Roger Keyes, C.B., M.V.O.

The vessels detailed for the operation arrived at their rendezvous before daylight, and as soon as the light was sufficient the seaplanes were hoisted out and despatched. The following Air Service officers and observers took part in the reconnaissance :

*Pilots :*

Flight-Commander (now Squadron-Commander) Douglas Austin Oliver.

Flight-Commander Francis Esme Theodore Hewlett.

Flight-Commander Robert Peel Ross.

Flight-Commander Cecil Francis Kilner.

Flight-Lieutenant (now Flight-Commander) Arnold John Miley.

Flight-Lieutenant Charles Humphrey Kingsman Edmonds.

Flight-Sub-Lieutenant (now Flight-Lieutenant) Vivian Gaskell Blackburn.

*Observers :*

Lieutenant Erskine Childers, R.N.V.R., C.P.O.
Mechanic James W. Bell, C.P.O.
Mechanic Gilbert H. W. Budds.

*The seaplane-carriers were commanded by :*

Squadron-Commander Cecil J. L'Estrange Malone.
Flight-Commander Edmund D. M. Robertson.
Flight-Commander Frederick W. Bowhill.

At the beginning of the flight the weather was clear, but on nearing the land the seaplanes met with thick weather, and were compelled to fly low, thus becoming exposed to a heavy fire at short range from ships and shore batteries. Several machines were hit, but all remained in the air for over three hours, and succeeded in obtaining valuable information regarding the disposition of the enemy's ships and defences. Bombs were also dropped on military points. In the meanwhile German submarines, seaplanes, and Zeppelins delivered a combined attack upon the light cruisers, destroyers, and seaplane-carriers, but were driven off.

Flight-Commanders Kilner and Ross and Flight-Lieutenant Edmonds regained their ships. Flight-Commander Oliver, Flight-Lieutenant Miley, and Flight Sub-Lieutenant Blackburn became short of fuel and were compelled to descend near submarine E–11, which, with other submarine vessels, was watching inshore to assist any seaplane that might be in difficulties. Lieutenant-Commander Martin E. Nasmith, commanding E–11, although attacked by an airship, succeeded by his coolness and resource in rescuing the three pilots. Flight-Commander Hewlett, after a flight of three and a half hours, was compelled to descend on account of engine trouble, but was rescued by a Dutch

trawler, landed in Holland, and returned safely to England.

An expression of their Lordships' appreciation has been conveyed to Commodore Keyes (Commodore S), Commodore Tyrwhitt (Commodore T), and to Captain Sueter (Director of the Air Department), for their share in the combined operations which resulted in this successful reconnaissance.

The King has been graciously pleased to give orders for the following appointments to the Distinguished Service Order.

*To be Companion of the Distinguished Service Order :*

Captain Cecil Francis Kilner, R.M.L.I. (Flight-Commander).

Lieutenant Charles Humphrey Kingsman Edmonds, R.N. (Flight-Lieutenant).

The following awards have also been made.

*To receive the Distinguished Service Medal :*

Chief Petty Officer Mechanic James William Bell, No. M. 489.

Chief Petty Officer Mechanic Gilbert Howard William Budds, No. 271764.

*Admiralty,*
*February 19th, 1915.*

# PART TWO

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### *The Dogger Bank Action*

"OH, FIREMAN, SAVE MY CHILD!" A variation of this heart-rending appeal was for ever being made to the ships of the Harwich destroyer and light cruiser flotillas, and the ships and their crews were like firemen—ever ready and on the alert when on duty, and always handy when off duty. Incidents happened so quickly and with such deadly consequences that a delay of a few short minutes could easily mean the difference between saving a valuable man-o'-war which had been damaged by torpedo or mine; or, if a ship had been sunk, then mere seconds often decided the fate of valuable trained naval men who were left struggling in the water.

These contingencies of war made it necessary to have one portion of the Harwich fleet at sea most of the time patrolling enemy waters. The other vessels in harbour were organized so that a few were moored at Felixstowe at the "Trot", just inside the anti-submarine defence "gates", as they were called. These ships always had "steam up" in their boilers, and could rush to sea at a few minutes' notice by the simple expedient of "slipping their cables". They were moored to buoys, and all they had to do in order to slip their cables was knock out a shackle-pin. Their principal duties consisted in speeding to the rescue of ships in distress, or to attack enemy submarines which were sighted at sea in the vicinity of Harwich.

It has been said, and I honestly believe it to be true, that there were millions of mines laid in the southern portion of the North Sea during the war. One thing is certain—the large number of mines which were sighted and destroyed

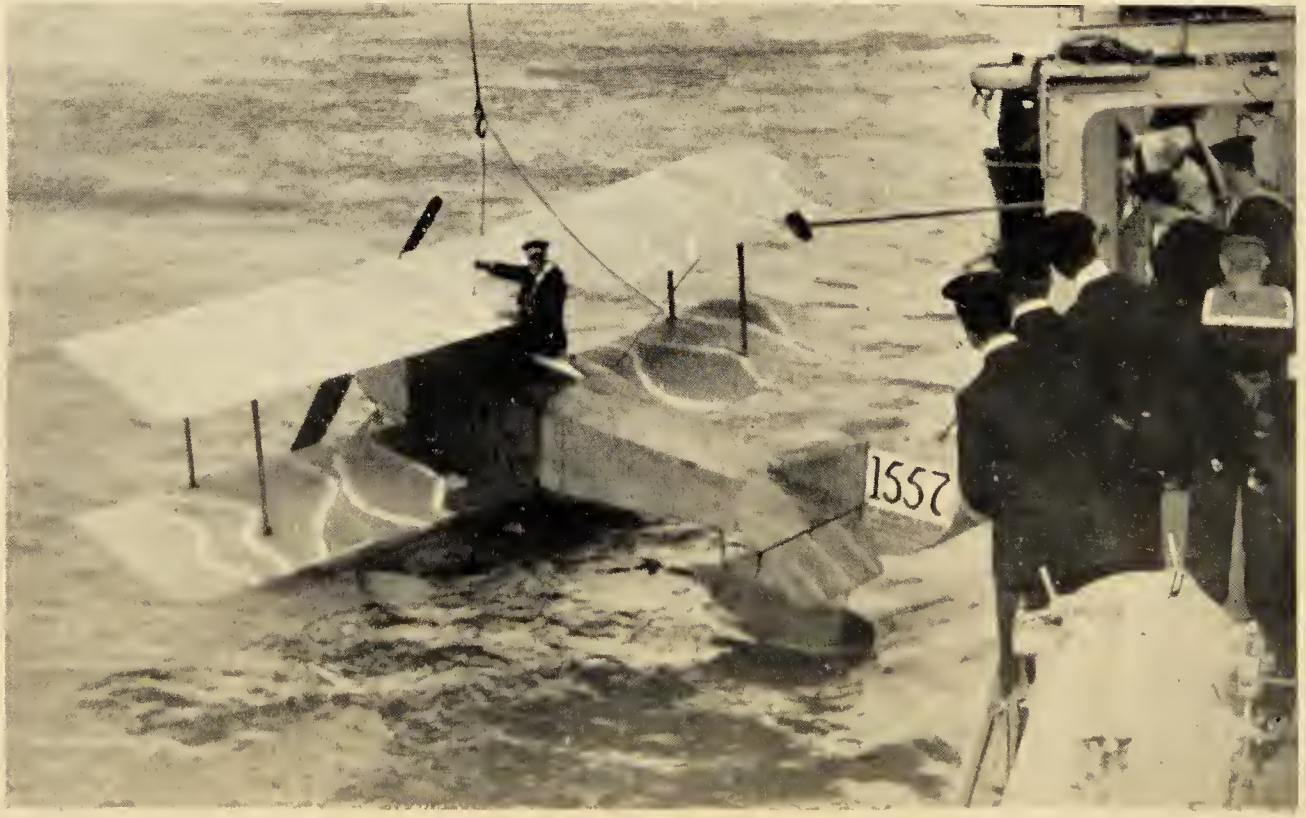
(after heavy weather broke them adrift from their moorings), and the number which were brought to the surface by our mine-sweepers and exploded, satisfied most people I served with that the mines were "thicker than peas in pea soup" ; and to my mind that saying just about hit the nail on the head, because in addition to the peas we experienced plenty of the soup. Dirty, foul, wet, miserable weather, with "pea-soup" fogs thrown in for good measure, were a goodly portion of our everyday lives. Some sections of the approaches to Harwich must have been mined by enemy mine-laying submarines every high tide. Every ship that went to sea had to run the gauntlet, first by passing through the mine-fields, and then from attack by German U–boats which lay in ambush off our harbours. Despite all the precautions taken to reduce these dangers to a minimum, the loss of ships and men continued with such dreadful regularity that Harwich became known as the "Graveyard of the Fleet".

It is the purpose of this book to record the facts as well as possible, in order to pass on to posterity not so much the spectacular heroism of the officers and men who served in "hard-lying ships", but because they displayed a grim tenacity of purpose, an unflinching determination to do their duty under the most atrocious weather conditions, an extraordinary cheerfulness during months of nerve-racking monotony, an *esprit de corps* and loyalty that has never before been equalled. It must be remembered that it depended on the conduct of these men whether or not Britain retained her prestige as the greatest naval power in the world. Had they not carried on as they did we would have deteriorated to a second-class naval power.

I do not wish to detract from the useful work performed by the battle fleets, the battle-cruiser squadrons, and those cruisers which patrolled the ocean and made it as safe as possible for commerce. They had a job to do and they did it well ; but it was the light cruisers, destroyers, submarines, mine-layers, sweepers, and trawlers which, because of the nature of their duties, came in contact with the enemy on such frequent occasions ; and had they not upheld the

[*Photo : Cmdr. C. L. A. Woollard, R.N. (Retd.), F.R.G.S., F.R.E.S.*

*Saucy Arethusa* SINKING, AFTER STRIKING A MINE OFF SOUTHWOLD, FEBRUARY 11, 1916




[*Photo: Cmdr. C. L. A. Woollard, R.N. (Retd.), F.R.G.S., F.R.E.S.*

SEAPLANE BEING HOISTED OUT FROM *Undaunted* FOR A RAID ON SCHLESWIG HOLSTEIN, MARCH 25, 1916

highest traditions of the Service and proved they were still the "boys of the bulldog breed", it is certain it would have been our Fleet which would have been made to surrender under the terms of the Armistice, and not that of the enemy.

When attending the Warriors' Day luncheon (August 27th, 1938) at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto, the highlight of the occasion was the announcement of Lord Stanley, Secretary of State for the Dominions. He said, "Some people in the Dominions and other countries seem to have arrived at the conclusion that the youth of England today is decadent and perverted. They are entirely wrong. The youth of England today is just every bit as good as we were in 1914–1918. I won't say they are better, because I have two sons and it would make their heads swell. The youth of Britain want a generation of peace rather than bloodshed, just the same as the youth of Canada and the United States ; but if the rest of the world deny them the right to live at peace, then they will give a good account of themselves if it comes to war."

It was the actions and deeds of Drake, Frobisher, Nelson, and a score of other illustrious Britishers which established the old standard and traditions, and we were asked to measure up to these standards during the last war. If the youth of England pick up the torch where the men of the Harwich forces laid it down, then the people of the British Empire need have no fear of the ultimate outcome of any war which is forced upon us.

During the month of January 1915 the Harwich forces were on the *qui vive* the whole of the time. Hardly a day passed without the order being received to "raise steam with all despatch", and more frequently than not the order would subsequently be cancelled without explanation or anything having happened. There is no need to enlarge on how trying this sort of thing was on the nerves, and it was also a problem to know how to keep the men amused and happy when all ships "reverted to the regular four hours' notice".

Dame Rumour held full sway during this particular time. Whispers of intended invasion of the east coast by an enemy

expeditionary force which would strike south and cut off London from the Empire was one. A second Scarborough raid was another explanation the men figured might be the cause of all this jumpiness. Others argued the enemy fleet would come out and fight a decisive battle and decide the outcome of the war ; and while they whispered around their mess decks the things they had heard from the stewards and the cooks, the weather was wet, cold, and miserable as charity, and snow whitened the surrounding countryside. Then it happened. On Saturday afternoon, January 23rd, 1915, the order came for the umpteenth time : "Raise steam with all despatch" ; but this time all ships went to sea. Our submarines patrolling enemy waters had sighted the enemy fleet putting to sea. At enormous risk to themselves, our submarines came to the surface the moment the enemy fleet had passed them, and wirelessed the news to the C.-in-C. By using their wireless these submarines gave their own position away to the enemy and paid for their action by being soundly hunted by anti-submarine patrols.

The object in allowing the enemy fleet to pass through our submarine patrols unmolested was in order to bring about a naval battle on a large scale. To have attacked an enemy fleet while outward bound, with a single submarine, could only have resulted in sinking one or at most two enemy ships, and perhaps none at all. The attack would have immediately disclosed the position of the submarine, and no chance would be taken of letting her escape if her destruction were at all possible. So, for the most part, submarines had to play the role of scouts—they had to see without being seen, and pass on their information to the right quarters as soon as possible. This particular time they reported seeing four enemy battle cruisers, six light cruisers, and twenty destroyers steaming at high speed and heading for the east coast of England.

Commodore Tyrwhitt aboard the *Arethusa* led the way out of Harwich, followed by his whole command. The light cruisers *Undaunted* and *Aurora* both led a flotilla of destroyers. They proceeded at twenty-eight knots and

steered a course which would enable them to get between the enemy force and the coast of Germany. Vice-Admiral Beatty left Rosyth about 6 p.m. and headed straight for a position which, it was calculated, would intercept the enemy. He was in the *Lion* and led his famous battle cruisers and a flotilla of destroyers. Admiral Jellicoe led the Grand Fleet to sea from Scapa Flow and headed for the coast of Norway with the intention of preventing the enemy ships retreating by way of the Skagerrack and Cattegat into the Baltic when they encountered Beatty's squadron or the Harwich forces ; and he was ready to support the faster ships with the weight of his battleships' armament should the enemy High Seas Fleet put to sea in order to extricate their ships from the trap which was being prepared for their reception.

Into the dark of that winter's night hundreds of ships steamed ; hidden death was under them and all around them. The wind blew lustily from the north-east, causing the smaller craft to ship heavy spray aboard, so that everyone on duty was drenched to the skin. The ships were steaming without lights and the crew were in double watches.

The officers up on the bridge strained their eyes searching the darkness for the few sparks flying from the funnels of enemy ships which might set the blaze for the greatest naval action in the world's history. The men, wrapped up in oilskins over their duffle clothing, rested at their action-stations, lying down by their guns or alongside their torpedo tubes. They knew not where they were going ; they knew not what odds they might be asked to fight against at a moment's notice ; they knew not how near the enemy ships might be. Was a better phrase ever fashioned : "Theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do or die" ? And did they worry ? Not a bit—irrespective of what arm-chair critics might say. The rank and file in the Navy had every confidence in Admiral Jellicoe, Vice-Admiral Beatty, and Commodore Tyrwhitt, and as far as "The Harwich Striking Force" was concerned, the men were quite willing to follow their leaders into the mouth of hell if necessary, and they wouldn't squawk if the powers that be had neglected to issue them with asbestos clothing.

Every officer who was entrusted with the command of a ship attached to that famous force modelled his own conduct according to the example of his Commodore, and they passed on that feeling of confidence and devil-may-care don't-give-a-damn attitude to their men. The men loved them, loved them so much they affectionately dubbed them with nicknames like "Nutty" Shove (who commanded submarine E–29); "Hell-Fire Jack", or "Dare-Devil Jack", who was Lieut.-Commander H. Forester—of whom one of his men, Harold E. Hewett, told me : "After the *Meteor* was converted into a mine-laying destroyer we had some pretty close calls ; but our Captain at this time was a proper goer—Lieut.-Commander H. Forester, known to the boys as 'Dare-Devil Jack' or 'Hell-Fire Jack'."

Another lower-deck rating, P.O. Joe Leach, in referring to Commodore Tyrwhitt, said : "Commodore Tyrwhitt is the finest sailor Britain has produced since Nelson sailed the old *Victory*, and you cannot give him too much credit."

These brief illustrations prove my contentions in regard to the spirit of confidence that existed in the personnel of the hard-lying ships, and made it possible for men to follow their leaders unquestioningly into any danger.

We are not concerned so much with how the senior officers manœuvred their ships to bring about this action. What we are concerned with is proving that, given the right kind of ship and the necessary number, British sailors during the world war were just as good men as they were in Nelson's day and possibly a great deal better. If we can convince the present generation of seamen that they must uphold the traditions of the past unsoiled and unsullied, as their fathers did twenty years ago, there is every reason to believe they will rise to any height of service and self-sacrifice required of them.

I will describe the Dogger Bank action, which was fought on Sunday, January 24th, 1915, through the eyes of various men who took part in that memorable sea fight.

Commander Claude L. A. Woollard, F.R.G.S., who served aboard the *Undaunted*, said :

"All through the night (i.e. 23rd and 24th January, 1915) the Harwich flotillas steamed at twenty-eight knots without lights. Everyone aboard was in double watches and ready to act at a moment's notice. At 6 a.m. we joined up with Admiral Beatty's force, consisting of the *Lion* flagship, *Princess Royal*, *Tiger*, *New Zealand*, and *Indomitable*, and shortly afterwards we were detailed to dash ahead and try to sight the enemy. At 7 a.m. the flash of guns was observed S.S.E., and a few minutes later the *Aurora*, which was stationed five miles to the eastward of us, reported she had engaged the enemy.

"It was still hardly daylight, and it was difficult to identify the enemy, which were evidently heading for the Yorkshire coast ; but the word soon passed around that we were engaging the *Blücher*, *Moltke*, *Seydlitz*, and *Derflinger*, half a dozen light cruisers, and a flotilla of destroyers. The weather had cleared and they had no fog to hide them this time. They fell victims to over-confidence, expecting to approach our coast unchallenged as on previous occasions. But good fortune was with us, and all the German admirals' schemes to bombard the Yorkshire coast went by the board. No sooner did the enemy sight our ships than they turned, almost as if on a pivot, and scurried back for home like rats to their holes. Smoke belched from their funnels, telling of the frantic efforts being exerted in the stoke-holes of the enemy ships. They ran away at full speed, and at this time did not fire a shot in return.

"A stern chase followed. We manœuvred our ships in an effort to cut off the enemy and make it impossible for them to return to port, and gradually our battle cruisers crept up on them until the *Lion* and *Tiger* finally opened fire on the rear ship of the enemy line at a range of 20,000 yards. Their target was the *Blücher*. The enemy at this time was in single line ahead with their light cruisers and destroyers on their starboard beam. At 9.9 a.m. the *Lion* (which was a "good-shooting ship") made her first hit and at 9.14 a.m. the enemy returned our fire and the action became general.

"The smoke from our funnels threatened to foul the battle cruisers' vision, and we were ordered to take up our position on the Admiral's port quarter, whilst one of our destroyer flotillas under the command of Captain the Hon. H. Meade, D.S.O., who had the *Meteor*, was ordered to chase and engage the enemy destroyers, who were evidently manœuvring for the purpose of delivering a torpedo attack against our battle cruisers."

We will now let Harold E. Hewett, now of Port Colborne, Ontario, Canada, who served aboard the destroyer *Meteor*, tell the story of what happened after his ship was ordered to lead the chase and attack the enemy destroyers.

"Just before this action we had changed Captains, and now had Captain the Hon. H. Meade, D.S.O. He had just been promoted to the rank of Captain, so that made us the senior ship of all the destroyers, and we took the lead. At 8.30 a.m. we had the first round fired at us.

"We saw the *Blücher* was hit and we heard afterwards from survivors we picked up out of the water that the *Lion* had secured a direct hit with her second salvo, which carried away their bridge, killing the Captain, navigating officer, and First Lieutenant. At 9.20 a.m. we saw the *Blücher* was on fire and burning badly. Her fore-deck was enveloped in flames and our ship's company could not refrain from raising a spontaneous cheer.

"A few minutes later, however, the crew of the German ship seemed to get the fire under control, but it broke out again as fiercely as ever.

"The *Indomitable* had not until this time fired a shot. We, the *Meteor*, passed her and left her astern on the starboard side and took up our position nearly abreast of the *New Zealand*. We were well ahead of the remainder of our light cruisers and destroyers because of our superior speed. The enemy altered course, evidently heading for home, but our ships raised every ounce of steam and gradually overhauled them. As the range decreased we saw the shells from our ships were taking effect, and it soon appeared as if we were battering the enemy to pieces. From the number of hits

we observed, and the resulting fires, it seemed incredible that they could absorb so much punishment without losing more speed.

"I also observed that all four of the enemy's heavy ships consistently concentrated their fire on our flagship the *Lion*, but it was about half an hour before she was seriously hit. We maintained our position abeam of the *New Zealand* until 11 a.m., when we were ordered to close the *Lion* in order to cover her, and we spurted ahead and were soon between the enemy ships and our own. No person except those aboard the *Meteor* could possibly imagine what we went through the next hour and a quarter. It was simply hell, and no other word can describe it. We were in direct line of fire. Shells screamed over us and fell all around us as the enemy fired at the *Lion*, and every now and again they would shift their range and make us the target; and when they did there was not a man among the crew but thought our time had come.

"We were steaming at thirty-five knots this time, and the vibration was terrible. It was a wonder the *Meteor* didn't shake to pieces. Range-finding was almost impossible because the vibration made the delicate range-finding instruments next to useless. Our four battle cruisers were blasting away, their shells going over the top of us, and the enemy ships were shooting at us. The screech of projectiles flying over us was so great that it seemed as if the air was torn to ribbons. Heavy 12-inch shells dropped so near that they raised huge columns of water a hundred feet into the air only a few yards away. The spray washed our decks and drenched all hands.

"I still remember as if it was only yesterday the terrific din as our ships fired, and I can still see the flashes of light and the dense clouds of yellow and black smoke which followed a direct hit. Sometimes the smoke was heavy enough to shut out a whole ship from view. We didn't know if she was still there or had been wiped out completely.

"The grandeur of the whole thing was awe-inspiring

and although one realised that it was almost inevitable that something terrible would happen, yet in the excitement one forgot personal danger, and every man aboard did his job and fought the ship.

"Shortly after 11 a.m. the *Lion* was forced to draw out of line because her speed was reduced when a shell hit the boiler-room. The *Princess Royal* took the lead. Still the *Meteor* seemed to possess a charmed life. Time and again we ploughed right through solid curtains of water which rose as a salvo of shells fell ahead, missing us by only a few yards. It was little less than miraculous how we continued so long without being hit. The suspense would have been terrible had we not been kept busy and had our attention occupied with the things which were happening all around us.

"By this time the *Blücher* was in a pitiful condition. One funnel had disappeared as if it had been chipped off. The other two were perforated like vegetable-graters and you could see them tottering. The fore and main top-masts and the tripod were still standing, but they were in a shaky condition.

"We were not in the least surprised when we saw her drop out of line and fall astern of the other German vessels which could do nothing but leave her to her fate.

"As her flag was flying, and what guns she had left were still in action, our ships fired at her as they passed and reduced her to scrap-iron. It was incredible the amount of punishment she took without sinking, and as we closed in on her it was quite obvious she was in her death agony. She was settling down, though still on an even keel. We were detailed to finish her, so we closed in rapidly and circled her. She was dying but far from dead, because, as we circled she fired her last round at precisely 12.5 noon, and we were on the receiving end. The shell went into our foremost boiler-room, entering on the port side, putting No. 1 boiler out of action and damaging No. 2. Three stokers were killed outright and two seriously wounded. One of the wounded died a short time afterwards.

"It is hard to describe just what happened after we were hit, and keep the incidents in proper sequence.

"Lieutenant Peters, our number one, did some very good work getting the fires which resulted from the shell explosion under control, and he was afterwards awarded the D.S.O. for his coolness and bravery. We had aboard as a probationary surgeon a young medical student from some hospital, but he proved himself a brick right through, and he went down below and fixed up the wounded while smoke, steam, and flames were all around him. He also received the D.S.C., and he deserved it.

"Our funnels looked like the top of a pepper-shaker, but in less than two short minutes we had our revenge. We discharged our torpedoes right into the *Blücher* at short range and hit her almost amidships. The shock of the explosion was so terrific that the *Blücher* seemed to heel right over on her side. She sank eight and a half minutes afterwards.

"From our position we could see her last remaining gun, the one which had done our damage, pointing grotesquely towards the sky. Hundreds of her crew scrambled over the rails and took up their positions on her slippery sides. They were brave fellows, and a great number of them stood to attention and held hands, standing just as they would if on the upper deck at divisions, and thus they waited for the ship they had so nobly fought to take her final plunge.

"But there was no final plunge such as we expected to see her take. Slowly, very slowly, she settled down until the water was knee-deep around the men standing on her side. Some just slithered into the sea, but others seemed to go crazy with the strain and leaped madly. The vessel seemed to sigh like a sleeping whale as the air imprisoned in her battered hull made its escape. She seemed weary from her splendid fight ; she was battered into a shapeless mess ; but, give her crew credit, they were still unbeaten, and with flag proudly flying she let out another prolonged sigh, and in a manner which made one think of the death of something human she shuddered and gave up the ghost. A moment more and she had completely disappeared, and

nothing remained but a thousand heads bobbing about in the water. The agonizing death cries are something horrible to remember.

"We were less than 250 yards away when she went down. I still can't eliminate from my mind the extraordinary ease and smoothness with which she sank. Not until the waves had almost entirely covered her did she heave slightly out of the water like a punch-drunk fighter trying to stagger back on to his feet again. Then she disappeared stern first, just sliding below the surface slowly and deliberately. I have no wish to witness such an appalling spectacle again," Hewett added seriously.

"The moment she went under it was 'out boats and rescue survivors', and there was plenty of work to do. Then something happened which I have never heard explained, and I don't think ever will be explained satisfactorily. While we were engaged in our work of mercy a Zeppelin and a taube put in their appearance and proceeded to drop bombs on us ; some of the bombs dropped right amongst thick groups of enemy sailors while they were swimming for their lives, and the Zeppelin and the taube continued their attack until driven off by the shell-fire from the *Arethusa* and her destroyers.

"After we had finished picking up survivors, H.M.S. *Liberty* took us in tow and we headed for Grimsby. Our Captain deserves great credit. He was as cool as a cucumber all through the show, and even after we had been taken in tow he told the Captain of *Liberty*, 'If anything happens, slip our tow and look out for yourself.' We had very little fresh water to drink as our condensers had been damaged. We made slow headway and were for ever on the alert expecting some of the enemy light forces would deliver a night attack and try to finish us off ; but nothing happened until about midnight, when one of the wounded men died and we carried his body out and placed it with the others.

"About 8 a.m. on Monday tugs met us and we were towed into Immingham, and we tied up about noon. There were plenty of newspaper reporters on hand, but we were warned

not to say anything. Our dead were taken ashore and the wounded removed to hospital. While we were making temporary repairs the town folk brought us all kinds of fresh fruit and vegetables, which were very much appreciated by all on board.

"Our Captain asked permission for our own crew to bury our dead, but this was refused and we had to proceed to Harwich. This we did under our own steam, and from there we went to Southampton to complete our overhaul and repairs. As soon as we were in shape again we took our place with the Harwich flotillas."

Thanks, Mr. Hewett, for a clear, unvarnished account of a great fight.

In every serious situation there are gems of spontaneous humour without which modern warfare would have to be painted as black as night without any relief of any sort. We should, therefore, record the story which I heard told about an incident which happened aboard H.M.S. *Lion*, and if it happened aboard some other ship I hope I may be corrected ; but this is as it was told to me.

At the height of the action, after the *Lion* was hit, it is alleged Vice-Admiral Beatty sent his Flag-Lieutenant to find out just exactly how serious was the damage done to the engine-room and boilers. As explained before, in order to overtake the enemy ships every available man had been working down below driving the ships at speeds their builders never dreamed they could attain. As the F.L. hurried along to make his inspection and obtain reports from the engine-room staff he passed a group of stokers who were up on deck taking a breather. As he approached the men he heard one say to the others, "Well, and what do you think about it, Bill ?" The Flag-Lieutenant naturally thought they were discussing the action, and was amazed to hear Bill reply :

"Well, I don't exactly know . . . but to my way of thinkin' I thinks he oughta 'ave married the girl."

According to reports, there were other rather amusing incidents, and one told to me by a midshipman who served aboard the *Tiger* is worth telling. This young boy had

been severely wounded during the course of the action by a piece of shell splinter which missed his head by the fraction of an inch and entered his chest just below the collar-bone and ploughed its way downwards, opening him up like a butcher would a pig's carcass prior to disembowelling it. Fortunately, no damage was done to the vital organs, and he lived to carry round with him one of the biggest scars I ever saw, stretching as it did from just below his chin to his navel.

He told me that certain non-executive officers were taking their morning constitutional on the quarter-deck as the *Tiger* came into action, and an enemy shell dropped on the quarter-deck but did not cause any casualties. One officer said to the other, "Well, they say no two shells ever land in the same place," and he went and stood over the spot the first one had landed and viewed the battle, which had just started, from that vantage point. The next shell which hit the *Tiger* didn't land in the same spot, but unpleasantly near to it. It fell just behind the officer who had made the remark, with the result that he had to be rushed to the sick-bay, where the doctors took about four dozen large-size wood splinters from that part of his anatomy which he usually sat on. The midshipman roared with laughter as he told the story, and finished, "Talk about sitting down . . . why, the poor blighter couldn't even rest on his back all the time I was with him—he had to lie on his stomach !"

Another interesting fact concerning the *Blücher* is the following, if true. I have been told on good authority that amongst the 17 officers and 307 men picked up by our ships after she sank was a Commander of the name of John Ross. The man who told this said that John Ross explained to him that his father went to Germany as a boy, was naturalized, and afterwards became a manager in the Krupp steel works. John Ross was born in Germany, entered the navy, and rose to the rank of Commander and was serving aboard the *Blücher* when she was sunk.

Our ships continued the action after the *Blücher* sank,

and pounded the three remaining enemy vessels until they reached a point less than forty nautical miles from Heligoland. The *Moltke* and the *Derflinger* were on fire and looked like roaring smelter furnaces. Too much credit cannot be given the shipbuilders who constructed these vessels ; and I think most officers and men who crossed swords with the enemy at sea feel as I do—that we could improve our ships tremendously by introducing some of their more worth-while features, because it is hard to forget how the *Queen Mary* was blown to smithereens at Jutland, or how some of our submarine Commanders, after taking all the risks involved in an attack, made direct hits with their torpedoes, only to be disappointed and learn afterwards that their intended victims had managed to make port although badly damaged.

Incidentally, the probationary surgeon, James A. Stirling, R.N.V.R., aboard the *Meteor*, received his D.S.C. for courageously descending into the stoke-hole (where the enemy shell had exploded) and with the aid of candlelight amputating a stoker's leg which was badly fractured and jammed solidly amongst the mass of twisted iron and steel. The poor fellow was like a bear which, after being wounded, had fallen foul of a trap in a pit-fall.

His position was so precarious and his sufferings so great that the heroic young student went down into the darkness and worked in the very bowels of the ship, with thick smoke, acrid fumes, and escaping steam all around him and his gallant assistants. These men worked removing the dead and assisting the wounded, not knowing the moment the *Meteor* might take her final plunge. The guns boomed angrily as the battle raged. Zeppelin and aeroplane dropped their bombs uncomfortably close, but calm and collectedly these heroes performed the crude surgical operation, and finally they carried their shipmate up on deck and made him as comfortable as circumstances permitted until the drug injected by hypodermic needle took effect.

Chief Engine Room Artificer W. Gillespie, Chief Stoker James Keating, Stoker Petty Officer Samuel Westaway, and Stoker Petty Officer Michael Flood were outstanding

amongst a whole crew of gallant seamen for their coolness, courage, and resourcefulness during the action after their ship the *Meteor* had been so seriously disabled, and they were all mentioned by Vice-Admiral Sir David Beatty, K.C.B., M.V.O., D.S.O., in his despatch to the Admiralty.

Lieutenant Peters was awarded the D.S.O., Surgeon Probationer Stirling the D.S.C., and the Chief Engine Room Artificer and his four petty officers each received the D.S.M.

The action was discontinued because enemy submarines were reported directly ahead and it was known that extensive mine-fields had been laid in the area between our ships and the enemy coast. That the enemy submarines were lying in ambush is proved by the fact that the light cruiser *Aurora* sighted a periscope and promptly turned and rammed it. Shortly after the collision a large patch of oil rose to the surface, and in the patch of oil appeared a Berthon-type collapsible boat similar to those carried by all German U–boats.

The ships of the Harwich Force had been standing by waiting for the order to attack ; but the powers that be decided otherwise, and they retired from the action bitterly disappointed at not being given the opportunity to try to drive home a successful daylight torpedo attack. We must always remember, however, that at that particular time we were exceedingly short of destroyers. We hadn't sufficient to escort our merchantmen, or thoroughly to protect our big ships when they were at sea ; and it may be that, in this particular case, discretion was the better part of valour, because, while I am convinced that the ships of the Harwich flotillas would carry out to a successful conclusion anything they started out to accomplish, it is also certain that they would have suffered heavy losses before sending the three German cruisers to join the *Blücher* at the bottom of the North Sea. The final act of the drama as far as the *Blücher* is concerned came when the "*Saucy Arethusa*", leading, as always, rushed in and fired a torpedo at close range. The man who actually fired the "tin fish", if my information is correct, was

T. E. Newton, and this man died in hospital in Vancouver on March 20th, 1938, at the early age of forty-three.

Before leaving the Dogger Bank action we should consider for one moment the skill and fine judgment shown by Lieutenant-Commander Cyril Callaghan of H.M.S. *Attack*, who, at the critical moment, when the flagship *Lion* was hit and put out of action, ran his destroyer alongside the flagship and took Vice-Admiral Sir David Beatty aboard the *Attack* and transferred him and his flag to the *Princess Royal*. As Beatty himself said afterwards, "He displayed wonderfully good seamanship and enabled the transfer of the flag to be made in the shortest possible time."

One day, not so very long ago, I received a letter from a man who served on one of the "M" class destroyers, and in it he told me how his ship, the *M*——, had gone to the rescue of German sailors who were swimming round in the water.

The ship's cook was one of his best pals. He had gone away in the whaler. Those left aboard the *M*—— put dozens of rope-ends over the side for the drowning German sailors to cling to until a boat should pick them up. But when the work of rescue was at its height a Zeppelin and taube arrived and proceeded to drop their bombs on friend and foe alike. One bomb fell very close to the whaler in which the friend of the ship's cook was working, and the cook, seeing this, yelled at the top of his voice, "Let the blighters drown !"—and, suiting the action to the word, he took his meat-cleaver and cut all the ropes hanging over the ship's side and cast the German sailors adrift.

This same destroyer attempted to fire a torpedo which never left the tube, but jammed half-way out. For a moment there was quite a little excitement as the crew tried to withdraw the torpedo. Gunner T. Woods was in charge. A seaman torpedoman named Freeman said, in quite a matter-of-fact tone of voice, "Why don't you train the torpedo-tube fore and aft ?" Gunner Woods, in true naval fashion, barked at him, "Why didn't you think of that before ?"

After the whaler of the *M*—— returned with a full load of prisoners they proceeded at full speed to catch up with the rest of the fleet, and later on an officer appeared on the quarter-deck and said to Seaman Torpedoman Fred (always known as "Harry") Freeman, "It's a nice day." Freeman saluted smartly and replied, "Yes, sir." A moment later he realized he had saluted a German officer who had been loaned a dry suit by one of his own officers. He bent over, touched the deck with his fingers, and said to another shipmate, "There yer are, Bill, kick me 'ard."

This same gang of happy-go-lucky pirates was given shore leave at Chatham when they returned to base after the action. The only fly in the ointment was they didn't have any beer-money. But these men of "The Harwich Striking Force" could solve almost any problem and overcome any difficulty, so they went ashore and decided to auction off cap-bands which they had "hot-stuffed" from the German prisoners. The idea was a huge success. One hat-band which was auctioned by "Sparks" Patterson brought them enough money to buy all the beer they could drink for the rest of the night. As they wandered back on board their ship "Sparks" was overheard to remark to the ship's cook, "Arthur, yer son-of-a-gun, if you hadn't drooned so many Germans we'd have had all the beer-money we'd need for the duration of the ruddy war."

## ACTION IN THE NORTH SEA

On Sunday, January 24th, 1915.

(*Published in the Supplement to the "London Gazette" No. 29088 of March 3rd, 1915.*)

Admiralty,
March 3rd, 1915.

The following despatch has been received from Vice-Admiral Sir David Beatty, K.C.B., M.V.O., D.S.O.,

commanding the First Battle Cruiser Squadron, reporting the action in the North Sea on Sunday, January 24th, 1915.

H.M.S. *Princess Royal*,
February 2nd, 1915.

Sir,

I have the honour to report that at daybreak on January 24th, 1915, the following vessels were patrolling in company :

The battle cruisers *Lion*, Captain Alfred E. M. Chatfield, C.V.O., flying my flag ; *Princess Royal*, Captain Osmond de B. Brock, Aide-de-Camp ; *Tiger*, Captain Henry B. Pelly, M.V.O. ; *New Zealand*, Captain Lionel Halsey, C.M.G., Aide-de-Camp, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral Sir Archibald Moore, K.C.B., C.V.O. ; and *Indomitable*, Captain Francis W. Kennedy.

The light cruisers *Southampton*, flying the broad pennant of Commodore William E. Goodenough, M.V.O. ; *Nottingham*, Captain Charles B. Miller ; *Birmingham*, Captain Arthur A. M. Duff ; and *Lowestoft*, Captain Theobald W. B. Kennedy, were disposed on my port beam.

Commodore (T) Reginald Y. Tyrwhitt, C.B., in *Arethusa* ; *Aurora*, Captain Wilmot S. Nicholson ; *Undaunted*, Captain Francis G. St. John, M.V.O. ; *Arethusa* and the destroyer flotillas were ahead.

At 7.25 a.m. the flash of guns was observed S.S.E. Shortly afterwards a report reached me from *Aurora* that she was engaged with enemy ships. I immediately altered course to S.S.E., increased to twenty-two knots, and ordered the light cruisers and flotillas to chase S.S.E. to get in touch and report movements of enemy.

This order was acted upon with great promptitude—indeed, my wishes had already been forestalled by the respective senior officers—and reports almost immediately followed from *Southampton*, *Arethusa*, and *Aurora* as to the position and composition of the enemy, which consisted of three battle cruisers and *Blücher*, six light cruisers, and a

number of destroyers, steering N.W. The enemy had altered course to S.E. From now onwards the light cruisers maintained touch with the enemy, and kept me fully informed as to their movements.

The battle cruisers worked up to full speed, steering to the southward. The wind at the time was N.E., light, with extreme visibility. At 7.30 a.m. the enemy were sighted on the port bow, steaming fast, steering approximately S.E., distant fourteen miles.

Owing to the prompt reports received we had attained our position on the quarter of the enemy, and so altered course to S.E. parallel to them, and settled down to a long, stern chase, gradually increasing our speed until we reached 28.5 knots. Great credit is due to the engineer staffs of *New Zealand* and *Indomitable*—these ships greatly exceeded their normal speed.

At 8.52 a.m., as we had closed to within 20,000 yards of the rear ship, the battle cruisers manœuvred to keep on a line of bearing so that guns would bear, and *Lion* fired a single shot which fell short. The enemy at this time were in single line ahead, with light cruisers ahead, and a large number of destroyers on their starboard beam.

Single shots were fired at intervals to test the range, and at 9.9 a.m. *Lion* made her first hit on the *Blücher*, No. 4 in the line. The *Tiger* opened fire at 9.20 a.m. on the rear ship, the *Lion* shifted to No. 3 in the line at 18,000 yards, this ship being hit by several salvoes. The enemy returned our fire at 9.14 a.m. *Princess Royal*, on coming into range, opened fire on *Blücher*, the range of the leading ship being 17,500 yards at 9.35 a.m. *New Zealand* was within range of *Blücher*, which had dropped somewhat astern, and opened fire on her. *Princess Royal* shifted to the third ship in the line, inflicting considerable damage on her.

Our flotilla cruisers and destroyers had gradually dropped from a position broad on our beam to our port quarter, so as not to foul our range with their smoke ; but the enemy's destroyers threatening attack, the *Meteor* and "M" division passed ahead of us, Captain the Hon. H.

Meade, D.S.O., handling this division with conspicuous ability.

About 9.45 a.m. the situation was as follows: *Blücher*, the fourth in their line, already showed signs of having suffered severely from gun-fire; their leading ship and No. 3 were also on fire. *Lion* was engaging No. 1, *Princess Royal* No. 3, *New Zealand* No. 4, while the *Tiger*, who was second in our line, fired first at their No. 1, and when interfered with by smoke, at their No. 4.

The enemy's destroyers emitted vast columns of smoke to screen their battle cruisers, and under cover of this the latter now appeared to have altered course to the northward to increase their distance; and certainly the rear ships hauled out on the port quarter of their leader, thereby increasing their distance from our line. The battle cruisers, therefore, were ordered to form a line of bearing N.N.W., and proceed at their utmost speed.

Their destroyers then showed evident signs of an attempt to attack. *Lion* and *Tiger* opened fire on them, and caused them to retire and assume their original course.

The light cruisers maintained an excellent position on the port quarter of the enemy's line, enabling them to observe and keep touch, or attack any vessel that might fall out of the line.

At 10.48 a.m. the *Blücher*, which had dropped considerably astern of enemy's line, hauled out to port, steering north with a heavy list, on fire, and apparently in a defeated condition. I consequently ordered *Indomitable* to attack enemy breaking northward.

At 10.54 a.m. submarines were reported on the starboard bow, and I personally observed the wash of a periscope two points on our starboard bow. Immediately turned to port.

At 11.3 a.m. an injury to the *Lion* being reported as incapable of immediate repair, I directed *Lion* to shape course N.W. At 11.20 a.m. I called the *Attack* alongside, shifting my flag to her at about 11.35 a.m. I proceeded at utmost speed to rejoin the squadron, and met them at noon retiring N.N.W.

I boarded and hoisted my flag in *Princess Royal* at about 12.20 p.m., when Captain Brock acquainted me with what had occurred since the *Lion* fell out of the line—namely that *Blücher* had been sunk and that the enemy battle cruisers had continued their course to the eastward in a considerably damaged condition. He also informed me that a Zeppelin and a seaplane had endeavoured to drop bombs on the vessels which went to the rescue of the survivors of *Blücher*.

The good seamanship of Lieutenant-Commander Cyril Callaghan, H.M.S. *Attack*, in placing his vessel alongside the *Lion*, and subsequently the *Princess Royal*, enabled the transfer of flag to be made in the shortest possible time.

At 2 p.m. I closed *Lion* and received a report that her starboard engine was giving trouble owing to priming, and at 3.38 p.m. I ordered *Indomitable* to take her in tow, which was accomplished by 5 p.m.

The greatest credit is due to the Captains of *Indomitable* and *Lion* for the seamanlike manner in which the *Lion* was taken in tow under difficult circumstances.

The excellent steaming of the ships engaged in the operation was a conspicuous feature.

I attach an appendix giving the names of various officers and men for special mention, and as *Lion* and *Tiger* were the only ships hit by the enemy, the majority of those I mention belong to those ships.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) DAVID BEATTY.

Vice-Admiral.

*Officers*

Commander Charles A. Fountaine, H.M.S. *Lion.*
Lieutenant-Commander Evan C. Bunbury, H.M.S. *Lion.*
Lieutenant Frederic T. Peters, H.M.S. *Meteor.*
Lieutenant Charles M. R. Schwerdt, H.M.S. *Lion.*
Engineer Commander James L. Sands, H.M.S. *Southampton.*

Engineer Commander Thomas H. Turner, H.M.S. *New Zealand.*
Engineer Lieutenant-Commander George Preece, H.M.S. *Lion.*
Engineer Lieutenant Albert Knothe, H.M.S. *Indomitable.*
Surgeon Probationer James A. Stirling, R.N.V.R., H.M.S. *Meteor.*
Mr. Joseph H. Burton, Gunner (T), H.M.S. *Lion.*
Chief Carpenter Frederick E. Dailey, H.M.S. *Lion.*

*Petty Officers and Men*

Petty Officer John William Kemmett, O.N. 186788, H.M.S. *Lion.*
Able Seaman Henry Davis, O.N. 184526, H.M.S. *Tiger.*
Able Seaman Hubert F. Griffin, O.N. J.14160, H.M.S. *Princess Royal.*
Able Seaman Peter Stanley Livingstone, O.N. 234328, H.M.S. *Lion.*
Able Seaman Herbert Robison, O.N. 209112, H.M.S. *Tiger.*
Able Seaman George Henry le Seilleur, O.N. 156802, H.M.S. *Lion.*
Boy (1st Class), Francis G. H. Bamford, O.N. J.26598, H.M.S. *Tiger.*
Boy (1st Class), Julius F. Rogers, O.N. J.28329, H.M.S. *Tiger.*
Chief Engine Room Artificer (2nd Class), William Beaty Dand, O.N. 270648, H.M.S. *New Zealand.*
Chief Engine Room Artificer (1st Class), Evan Richard Hughes, O.N. 268999, H.M.S. *Indomitable.*
Chief Engine Room Artificer W. Gillespie, O.N. 270080, H.M.S. *Meteor.*
Mechanician Alexander James Cannon, O.N. 175440, H.M.S. *Lion.*
Mechanician Edward Charles Ephgrave, O.N. 288231, H.M.S. *Lion.*

Chief Stoker Patrick Callaghan, O.N. 278953, H.M.S. *Lion.*
Chief Stoker Alfred William Ferris, O.N. 175824, H.M.S. *Lion.*
Chief Stoker John Ernest James, Portsmouth O.N. 174232, H.M.S. *New Zealand.*
Chief Stoker William James, O.N. 153220 (R.F.R. Dev. A., 3422), H.M.S. *Indomitable.*
Chief Stoker James Keating, R.F.R., O.N. 165732, H.M.S. *Meteor.*
Stoker Petty Officer Michael Flood, R.F.R., O.N. 153418, H.M.S. *Meteor.*
Stoker Petty Officer Thomas William Hardy, O.N. 292542, H.M.S. *Indomitable.*
Stoker Petty Officer Albert John Sims, O.N. 276502, H.M.S. *New Zealand.*
Stoker Petty Officer Samuel Westaway, R.F.R., O.N. 300938, H.M.S. *Meteor.*
Acting Leading Stoker John Blackburn, O.N. K.4844, H.M.S. *Tiger.*
Stoker (1st Class), Alan H. Bennet, O.N. K.10700, H.M.S. *Tiger.*
Stoker (2nd Class), Harold Turner, O.N. K.22720, H.M.S. *Tiger.*
Leading Carpenter's Crew, Emmanuel Omega Bradley, O.N. 346621, H.M.S. *Lion.*
Leading Carpenter's Crew, Elisha Currie, O.N. 344851, H.M.S. *Lion.*
Sick Berth Attendant Charles S. Hutchinson, O.N. M.3882, H.M.S. *Tiger.*
Chief Writer Samuel G. White, O.N. 340597, H.M.S. *Tiger.*
Third Writer Herbert C. Green, O.N. M.8266, H.M.S. *Tiger.*
Officers' Steward (3rd Class), Fred W. Kearley, O.N. L.2716, H.M.S. *Tiger.*

## CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

Lord Chamberlain's Office,
St. James's Palace,
March 3rd, 1915.

The King has been graciously pleased to give orders for the following appointment to the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, in recognition of the services of the undermentioned officer mentioned in the foregoing despatch :

*To be an additional Member of the Military Division of the Third Class or Companion :*

Captain Osmond de Beauvoir Brock, A.D.C., Royal Navy.

Admiralty, S.W.,
March 3rd, 1915.

The King has been graciously pleased to give orders for the following appointment to the Distinguished Service Order, and for the award of the Distinguished Service Cross, to the undermentioned officers in recognition of their services mentioned in the foregoing despatch.

*To be Companion of the Distinguished Service Order :*

Lieutenant Frederick Thornton Peters, Royal Navy.

*To receive the Distinguished Service Cross :*

Surgeon Probationer James Alexander Stirling, R.N.V.R.
Gunner (T) Joseph H. Burton.
Chief Carpenter Frederick E. Dailey.

The following promotion has been made :
Commander Charles Andrew Fountaine to be a Captain in His Majesty's Fleet, to date March 3rd, 1915.

The following awards have also been made.

*To receive the Distinguished Service Medal:*

Petty Officer John William Kemmet, O.N. 186788.
Able Seaman Henry Davis, O.N. 184526.
Able Seaman Hubert F. Griffin, O.N. J.14160.
Able Seaman Peter Stanley Livingstone, O.N. 234328.
Able Seaman Herbert Robison, O.N. 209112.
Able Seaman George Henry le Seilleur, O.N. 156802.
Boy (1st Class), Francis G. H. Bamford, O.N. J.26598.
Boy (1st Class), Julius F. Rogers, O.N. J.28329.
Chief Engine Room Artificer (1st Class), Evan Richard Hughes, O.N. 268999.
Chief Engine Room Artificer (2nd Class), William Beaty Dand, O.N. 270648.
Chief Engine Room Artificer W. Gillespie, O.N. 270080.
Mechanician Alexander James Cannon, O.N. 175440.
Mechanician Edward Charles Ephgrave, O.N. 288231.
Chief Stoker Patrick Callaghan, O.N. 278953.
Chief Stoker Alfred William Ferris, O.N. 175824.
Chief Stoker John Ernest James, Portsmouth O.N. 174232.
Chief Stoker William James, O.N. 153220 (R.F.R. Dev. A., 3422).
Chief Stoker James Keating, R.F.R., O.N. 165732.
Stoker Petty Officer Michael Flood, R.F.R., O.N. 153418.
Stoker Petty Officer Thomas William Hardy, O.N. 292542.
Stoker Petty Officer Albert John Sims, O.N. 276502.
Stoker Petty Officer Samuel Westaway, R.F.R., O.N. 300938.
Acting Leading Stoker John Blackburn, O.N. K.4844.
Stoker (1st Class), Alan H. Bennet, O.N. K.10700.
Stoker (2nd Class), Harold Turner, O.N. K.22720.
Leading Carpenter's Crew, Emmanuel Omega Bradley, O.N. 346621.
Leading Carpenter's Crew, Elisha Currie, O.N. 344851.
Sick Berth Attendant Charles S. Hutchinson, O.N. M.3882.
Chief Writer Samuel G. White, O.N. 340597.
Third Writer Herbert C. Green, O.N. M.8266.
Officers' Steward (3rd Class), Fred W. Kearley, O.N. L.2716.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### *The Air Raid on Borkum*

*February 1915*

EARLY IN FEBRUARY the First Flotilla, together with their depot-ship H.M.S. *Woolwich*, moved from Harwich to South Queensferry, where they were attached to Admiral Beatty's Battle Cruiser Squadron, and if the truth must be told, the officers and men hated to leave Harwich, where they had experienced such hectic times. One destroyer Captain, sitting in the wardroom of the submarine depot-ship H.M.S. *Maidstone*, said, "The first six months of this jolly old war have proved most interesting. It has given destroyer and submarine officers a chance to carry out under actual war conditions the theories we have studied and trained for these many years. My one regret is that the powers that be wouldn't let me take one of those old perishers who sit in an arm-chair and blab, 'What is the Navy doing?' out to sea with me for a patrol or two. I'm just fiendish enough to want to take the blighters out to sea and stick them on the bridge of a destroyer tearing ahead of the light cruisers on a dark winter's night at a clip of twenty-five knots. I'd like to see the seas come breaking aboard and wash down their blasted necks. . . . I'd like to see the spray freeze on the carefully curled moustache and eyebrows. . . . I'd like to see them bloody well shiver when a "pea-soup" fog wrapped itself round them like a shroud, and make them realize they were as helpless to save themselves from destruction as a week-old babe in a cot if they bumped into a heavily armed enemy ship, or collided with even one of our own.

"I'd like to see their fingers twitch and the hair on their necks tingle when I informed them we'd only another fifty

miles to go and we'd be clear of the mine-field we'd wandered into during the fog. . . . I often wonder what they would say then. But even considering all the rottenness . . . and how the men stick it out so well . . . I somehow hate to leave Harwich. If I had my say, I wouldn't change jobs for the whole of the Grand Fleet. . . . I feel proud to have served with 'The Harwich Striking Force', and I wish all those who remain to carry on the good work the very best of luck, and good hunting !"—which just about summed up the whole thing in a nutshell.

*March 23rd, 1915.*

The regular work of escorting mine-layers and mine-sweepers back and forth, and doing the duty patrol in and out of enemy waters, went on without anything exciting happening ; but about the beginning of March that strange feeling referred to before began to assert itself round the mess decks and wardrooms. Both officers and men felt something was going to happen, and happen it did. The destroyer *Ariel* sank the German submarine U–12, and made no mistake about finishing the job off properly, if the reports which drifted about afterwards can be relied upon.

After the air raid on Cuxhaven on Christmas Day, 1914, several attempts were made to carry out similar attacks on that and other important German bases ; but the weather almost invariably intervened. A forecast of calm weather with good visibility had to be made at least twenty-four hours ahead ; and it was also necessary for the seaplane-carriers with their escort to leave Harwich about 8 a.m. the previous day in order to reach a position off the German coast at daylight next day, at which time a calm sea was necessary in order to hoist out the seaplanes without damage, while the latter required good visibility for their operations in order to pick up the seaplane-carriers on the completion of their attack. The visibility was also a most important factor for the safety of the Harwich Force, which, while operating in the hostile waters of the Heligoland Bight

were otherwise extremely liable to be cut off by superior German forces without sighting them.

The whole operation usually extended farther than this with the Harwich Force, the air raid acting only as a bait to entice the German Fleet to come out. A patrol off Terschelling would be established by the Harwich submarines, while just outside the Bight our battle cruisers would be in support, and farther out still the Grand Fleet in case a particular operation led to pursuit of the Harwich Force.

The guile of these air raids went further, since the battle cruisers and Grand Fleet were not always in support, although the submarine patrol always was. Hence the German Command was faced with the problem of not knowing what forces they would encounter if they did send out a cruiser force in pursuit.

On this occasion we had no heavy forces supporting the Harwich Force, but the battle cruisers had raised steam and "stood by" to put to sea at short notice.

With an air raid on Borkum as the objective on the above lines the Force sailed, escorting the seaplane-carrier *Vindex*, early in the forenoon of March 23rd, 1915. The Harwich Force consisted of the *Arethusa* (flagship), *Aurora*, and *Undaunted*, with some sixteen destroyers of the Third Flotilla ("L" class) and Tenth Flotilla ("M" class). The Force was short of destroyers due to several being detached temporarily for anti-submarine work on the west coast of England and in the Irish Sea, and also owing to the fact that some of the new Tenth Flotilla or "M" class were not yet complete.

The Harwich Oversea Submarine Flotilla had sailed previously with the *Lurcher* in order to take up their patrol on a line N.N.W. from Terschelling by dawn next day.

The weather was fine and calm with a favourable forecast except for the possible risk of fog.

During the day the destroyers formed an anti-submarine screen for the light cruisers and submarine-carrier and course was shaped past the Sunk and North Hinder Light-

vessels, and thence on a northerly course for a position well clear of Terschelling, the speed being about seventeen knots.

Nothing of interest occurred during the day except the usual sinking by destroyers of a few floating mines that were sighted and the boarding of one or two trawlers flying Dutch colours. Several fishing fleets were sighted, and many of the trawlers were examined. Their papers were invariably in order. It was noticeable, as on all similar occasions, that shortly after passing one of these fishing fleets there would be considerable wireless activity, which was most suspicious, and there was little doubt that our presence was reported by them. Time did not permit of a thorough examination of the trawlers boarded, of whom, no doubt, by far the greater number were innocent, whilst a thorough search by the examination staff in harbour would probably be necessary to locate the hidden wireless, carrier-pigeon boxes, and other proofs of their being other than an innocent neutral.

The raiding force proceeded north, well clear of the Dutch coast, and at dark formed in night-cruising order, the three light cruisers followed by the seaplane-carrier in line ahead in the centre with the two divisions (eight boats) of destroyers on either beam.

Towards midnight the weather became thick, and with dense fog coming on an hour later speed was reduced to twelve knots, but the force carried on in hopes that the weather would yet clear before daybreak.

At about 6 a.m. the Commodore decided that it was useless to continue, as, even if the fog cleared, it would be then too late to arrive at the prearranged position at daylight, so Commodore Tyrwhitt therefore decided to turn 180 degrees to port and increase speed to fifteen knots. In view of the formation of the Force he ordered two turns of ninety degrees to be made, ships altering course in succession, the destroyers preserving relative bearings on the cruiser line—in other words a wheel to port. The signal for the first turn of ninety degrees to port was made by wireless and unfortunately was not taken in by the *Landrail* on the inner side of

the wheel to port. She apparently lost touch with her next ahead at the moment and failed to follow her round as the latter turned. Instead she continued her northerly course across the track of the now turning cruiser line. In the fog they could not be seen, and, too late to avoid the inevitable collision, she found herself at right angles into the *Undaunted's* port quarter, into which she crashed, killing and wounding several of her crew and doing considerable damage to hull and upper deck, the twin torpedo tubes being lifted clean off the deck and bent to an angle of about twenty degrees. By a miracle the torpedoes did not explode ; had they done so it is almost certain the *Undaunted* would have been blown to pieces. The impact from the collision was so great that the *Landrail's* stem almost spanned the whole width of the *Undaunted* and caused her to heel over to a dangerous angle. As the *Landrail* recoiled from the blow it was seen that about thirty feet of her fore-deck had been crunched in like matchwood, a good deal of the wreckage being left on the *Undaunted's* upper deck. As luck would have it, none of the *Landrail's* crew was on the forward mess decks when the collision occurred, otherwise the loss of life would have been serious—another ten minutes later and one watch would have been sitting down on this mess deck having breakfast, so here Providence was kind again.

The situation was now grave. The *Undaunted* was almost out of action and must return to a dockyard at once. The seaplane-carrier was useless without destroyers to escort her back, and efforts must also be made to save the damaged *Landrail* if possible. The squadron's position too, off Terschelling, was within easy reach of an attack by German forces, and the withdrawal with the *Landrail* in her damaged condition must necessarily be slow. Moreover, the Germans must no doubt have been aware of the Force's presence, as, in addition to probable information obtained from fishing vessels, the use of wireless for giving the "turning" signals must have given away the position of the raiding force to the enemy's directional stations.

The only chance of a safe withdrawal lay in the fog and

our submarines both covering the retreat of our damaged ships.

The *Undaunted* was ordered to retire as best she could with an escort of four destroyers. The seaplane-carrier was sent back with six destroyers as escort and the *Mentor* took the *Landrail* in tow stern first and made for the North Hinder, although she was able to tow only at about five knots.

The Commodore with the *Arethusa* and *Aurora* and two divisions of destroyers proceeded to the eastward of our submarine patrol, where they cruised all that day in the dense fog at eight to ten knots, and at about 9 a.m., when they were crossing the submarine patrol line, they met the *Lurcher*, who was steaming up and down that line, very nearly colliding with her in the fog, which was still very dense.

There was considerable German wireless activity throughout the day, and there was no doubt that the enemy were despatching fast cruiser squadrons to locate the position of our forces.

The presence of our forces there at all seemed a risk, but having the advantage of knowing that any ship they heard or saw in the fog would undoubtedly be hostile, any attempt at pursuit would divert attention from the damaged *Landrail* by leading the enemy to the westward.

Nothing more was seen or heard during the day, though all the crews were kept at action stations, expecting to be attacked at any moment.

With dark and the continued fog, the Force retired slowly round Terschelling and to the southward, keeping well to the north of the *Landrail* in order to intercept possible pursuit.

During the night the wind freshened and it came on to blow from the south-east and the fog cleared ; and after daylight speed was increased, the flotilla spreading out in a sweep south in an endeavour to locate the *Landrail* and screen her back to harbour. The wind and sea increased considerably during the forenoon, and shortly after noon it was blowing hard and a heavy sea was running. In the early afternoon a wireless signal was received from the

*Mentor* giving her position and reporting that the *Landrail's* tow had parted in the heavy seas. Later on, at about 3 p.m., the *Aurora* was ordered to take the *Landrail* in tow while the destroyers circled round screening them, and it was now that one could clearly see the damage to the latter ship. The damaged stem had broken away in the sea and one saw from ahead of her right through into the open mess decks, while from the broadside view her forecastle was cut off just before the forecastle gun.

She was having a bad time in the heavy sea, but was managing to keep her stern up into it and thus saving her damaged stem.

Taking her in tow was a difficult matter, as towing stern to stern neither cruiser nor destroyer had a capstan aft and the wires had to be worked entirely by hand. The *Aurora* got her eventually in tow, only to part the tow-line as she went ahead and took the strain. The *Arethusa* then made an attempt to get a tow-line aboard, darkness making it still more difficult. However, by magnificent effort and skill she successfully accomplished the task, and by 7 p.m. the *Landrail* was safely in tow and steering a westerly course in order to avoid a head sea. The ships then acting as an escort now took up screening stations to cover the *Arethusa* and *Landrail* and steered for the Haisborough Channel in between the edges of the mine-fields at a speed of about 6 knots. The weather gradually improved on nearing the coast, and some forty hours later, when off the Sunk Light-vessel, at the approaches to Harwich, tugs from Chatham arrived on the spot and towed the *Landrail* to the Nore, while the remainder of the forces proceeded into harbour, which they were all glad to reach after a somewhat harassing and strenuous five days at sea.

The destroyers which had escorted the *Undaunted* and the seaplane-carrier had been back in harbour for over two days and had been anxiously awaiting the remainder of the flotilla, as nothing had been heard of them since the collision, due to necessary wireless silence having had to be kept, until their arrival off the east coast. H.M. the King, more-

over, had visited Harwich two days before, only to find the harbour practically empty and the position of the Commodore and our Force unknown.

In conclusion, one can only remark that the safe withdrawal of the whole Force, and their extrication from a very hazardous and dangerous position, was a most remarkable piece of good leadership, backed up by most excellent seamanship.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### *All Quiet on the East Coast?*

IT WAS PART OF THE DUTY of the Harwich Auxiliary Patrol to clear the navigational sea routes of enemy mines in the southern area of the North Sea and also to attack and destroy the enemy's mine-laying submarines whenever occasion presented itself. Not only had the various channels used by the Harwich Force to be kept regularly swept for mines but also those frequented by merchant ships, and it was also their duty to search the approaches to the base in advance of the squadron. This auxiliary unit was composed, about May 1915, of some hundred or so patrol and mine-sweeping trawlers and motor launches under the command of the S.N.O. (Senior Naval Officer) of the base. The work carried out by this patrol was arduous and hazardous—not only having to face dangers from mines and submarines, but also from Zeppelins, aeroplanes and surface craft. Enemy aircraft certainly did their utmost to try to interfere with the operations of the Auxiliary Force, but our ships suffered practically nothing from their attacks. But the mines amid which their duties took them daily were the greatest peril they had to face, for at the end of the war statistics showed that no less than twenty-six of the Harwich Auxiliary Patrol vessels were sunk, to say nothing of many others who were mined, but reached harbour safely afterwards. The resultant loss of life was heavy, and many heroic deeds stand to their account.

The German mine-layers were continuously at work laying mines at the approaches to Harwich, and as fast as they were cleared up, so new mine-fields came into being. Consequently sweeping operations went on unceasingly, the vessels employed on this duty usually leaving harbour long

before daylight in order to be in position to start mine-sweeping at daybreak or at a suitable state of the tide, and until they had completed their task no shipping was allowed to proceed up the channels.

Though every precaution was taken to ensure the channels being carefully swept, many vessels suffered disaster in spite of this, sometimes due to floating mines drifting down with the tide or mines being brought nearer the surface at low water.

The motor launches (commonly known as "M.L.s") were speedy, handy, and of shallow draught, and therefore admirably suited for exploring suspected mine-fields and the sinking of mines, both above and below water. They were also employed for patrol work and sometimes for light mine-sweeping operations.

They were commanded mostly by temporary R.N.V.R. officers who in their ordinary walks of life were solicitors, stockbrokers, accountants, and other professional men, some of whom were yachtsmen who very quickly adapted themselves to war conditions and were ever ready to put to sea in any weather to carry out the exacting and strenuous duties required of them. The following episode concerning "M.L. 58" will prove that these officers did not hesitate to push out into the North Sea under the worst weather conditions possible and handled their craft with great skill under very difficult circumstances.

One stormy afternoon, when "M.L. 58" was "standing by" for duty, a Royal Air Force launch came alongside with flying officers on board who reported that a Dutch seaplane had come down into the sea with engine trouble. Fully realizing the condition of the sea outside the harbour, the Captain of the M.L. 58 decided, however, to risk going out and making an attempt to render assistance.

After a very trying time driving through the teeth of the gale (much to the sorrowful feelings of the R.A.F. officers, who regretted having come out) they caught sight of the seaplane and approached with the greatest difficulty, but found it impossible to get alongside owing to the

mountainous seas ; after some trouble the dinghy with the two men in her was safely lowered, but failed to get alongside and nearly capsized in the attempt to make a line fast for the purpose of towing her into harbour. However, after several attempts the M.L. managed to steer sufficiently near to enable a line to be thrown across, which one of the Dutch pilots caught and lost no time in making fast to the struts of his machine, and the work of towing her in now commenced. All went well until the Beach End buoy off Felixstowe was reached, when, owing to the course being altered (which brought the M.L. and her tow into a following wind and tide), the seaplane suddenly nose-dived and began to sink, and in the nick of time the tow-line was cut, otherwise it might either have fouled the propellers or dragged the M.L.'s stern down. The two occupants of the seaplane barely had time to jump clear, and one who could not swim clung to some of the wreckage until picked up, both being saved eventually. The machine was subsequently, that same evening, washed up at Felixstowe beach, a total wreck.

It will be gathered that, apart from the very capable and dexterous manner in which the Commanding Officer of the M.L. handled his vessel, this incident went also to prove that these craft were quite stout and seaworthy and not the matchboxes they were sometimes spoken of as being.

On May 1st, 1915, at about noon, H.M.S. *Daisy* (Lieutenant-in-Command W. S. Bardwell, R.N.), of the Harwich Auxiliary Patrol, was in the vicinity of the Galloper Shoal in the Thames Approaches, on the look-out for enemy submarines.

H.M.S. *Recruit*, of the Nore Defence Flotilla, was also in this area, and at the time about five cables to the eastward of the *Daisy*.

It was a beautiful calm sunny day, and war seemed very unrealistic, when suddenly a dull explosion was heard, and from the bridge of the *Daisy* the forepart of the *Recruit* was seen to be enveloped in thick black smoke, while the

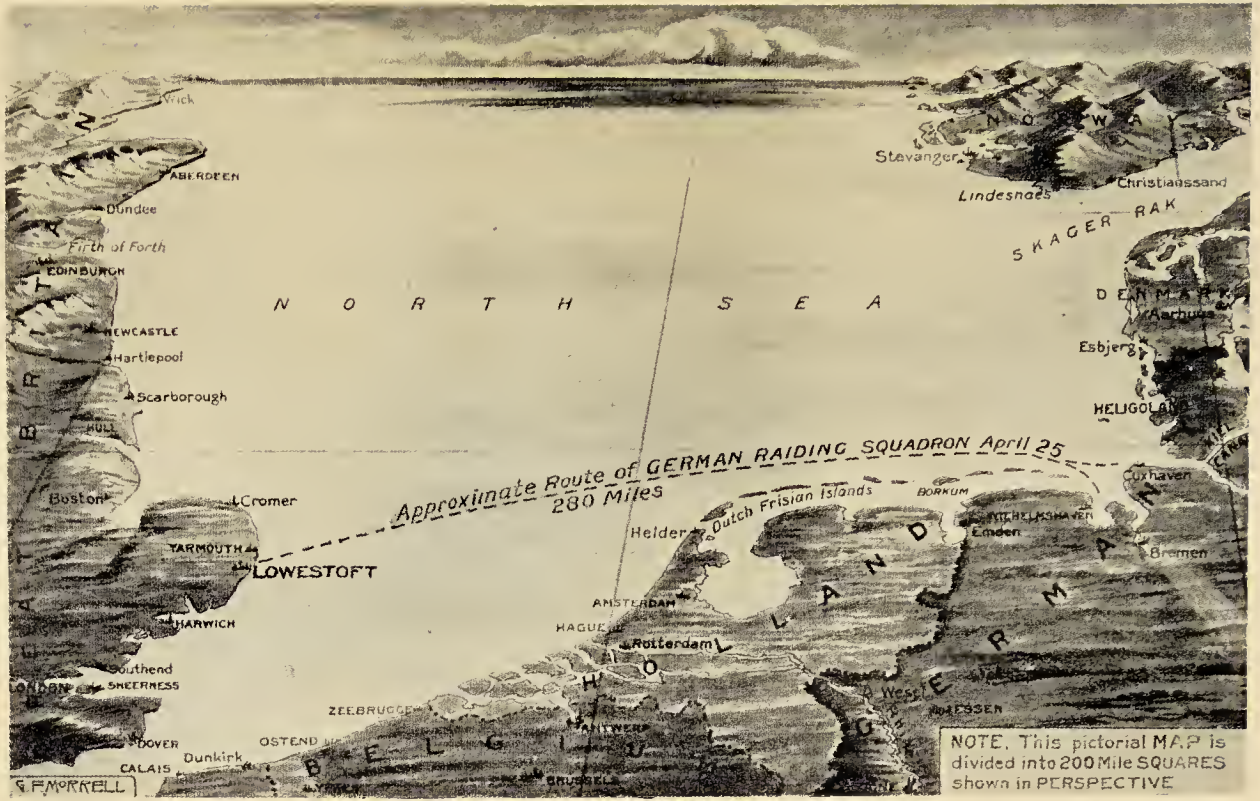
stern rose to an almost vertical position and then slid down out of sight beneath the surface.

It was all over in less than a minute, and one had almost to rub one's eyes to believe it true, for there was nothing left of the ship that had been there a minute before but some floating wreckage and some of her crew struggling in the water.

The *Daisy* instantly closed the spot, lowered her two boats, and went alongside a piece of wreckage to which the largest number of survivors were clinging. In all, twenty-seven officers and men were picked up, including the Captain—roughly a third of the ship's company. Most of the survivors were badly shaken, though none was seriously injured, and one of these, an able seaman, whose sense of humour remained unimpaired by the shock of the explosion, was found sitting in a lifebuoy when rescued, exhorting his rescuers to "Join the Navy and see life !"

The *Recruit* had apparently been torpedoed, and the *Daisy's* wireless signal to headquarters brought out the duty division of the Harwich Destroyer Flotilla, consisting of the *Laforey* (Senior Officer), *Lark*, *Lawford*, and *Leonidas*, under Commander Gradam Edwards, at full speed. This division searched the area thoroughly for hostile submarines, but without success, so proceeded to carry out their search still farther afield, and when off the North Hinder Light-vessel sighted two German torpedo boats which, having just sunk one of our armed patrol trawlers, were in the act of pursuing another.

On seeing the *Laforey's* division approaching they turned and fled, but our destroyers, with their superior speed and armament, soon came within range, and in a short time had completely blown them to pieces. Our vessels arrived on the scene just as they were sinking, to find that all the survivors of their crews had jumped overboard when they found "the game" was up, except the Captain of one, who shot himself rather than, as he thought, be left to drown. The two enemy torpedo boats proved to be the A–2 and A–6, which had ventured out from Zeebrugge on a commerce and fishing-fleet raid. Fifty-seven of their crews were picked up out of the




[*Drawing by G. F. Morell, for "The Graphic".*

THE GERMAN RAID ON LOWESTOFT AND YARMOUTH, APRIL 25, 1916

[*Photos : Cmdr. C. L. A. Woollard, R.N. (Retd.), F.R.G.S., F.R.E.S.*

*Above.* THE *Mentor* RETURNING INTO HARWICH HARBOUR ON AUGUST 7, 1917, WITH THIRTY-ONE FEET OF HER BOWS SMASHED IN

*Below.* BRITISH AIRSHIP ESCORTING A CONVOY IN THE NORTH SEA

water and given restoratives, clothes, and medical attention. When asked how many they had saved from our trawler, they gave evasive replies and said that they thought the explosion was so great, when they torpedoed her, that all her complement must have been killed outright!

During this brisk action none of our destroyers received so much as a hit, and the sinking of these two vessels more than amply made up for the loss of the *Recruit* but a few hours previously.

Towards the latter part of May 1915 German submarines laid a good many mine-fields off the east coast and Thames Estuary, with its resultant toll on our merchant shipping, though many were salvaged and brought safely into harbour.

On May 28th H.M.S. *Daisy*, being on patrol duty in the Harwich Approaches, sighted a sinking ship near the Longsand Light-vessel, and on closing her to investigate she proved to be the S.S. *Bretwalda*. As the *Daisy* approached it was seen that her crew had already left their ship in the lifeboats. Noticing that the ship showed no signs of sinking, it was decided to attempt to tow her into harbour, and this one of the mine-sweepers set out to do. A certain number of the crew with their Captain, having volunteered to return to the *Bretwalda*, were put on board again and the *Daisy* then proceeded to Harwich with the remainder of the crew and the ship's papers, and it was afterwards ascertained that the *Bretwalda* reached Gravesend safely.

An hour or so later the *Daisy* resumed her "beat" and sighted another ship flying distress signals in approximately the same position. She proved to be the S.S. *Honiton*, which had struck a mine in No. 2 hold. She did not appear to be in any immediate danger of sinking, and after one or two attempts the *Daisy* managed to get a tow-line on board and took her in tow, stern first, shaping a course through the Black Deep Channel. By dark the *Honiton* had been towed about ten miles, and anchored for the night, her

crew being taken on board the *Daisy*. At daybreak the following day the *Honiton* was still afloat, so the *Daisy* made fast alongside, and an armed trawler, which had been sent out by the S.N.O. at Harwich in response to the *Daisy's* wireless signal, secured to the other side, the anchor was weighed and they proceeded towards Gravesend ; but the speed attained was only approximately one knot, as the *Honiton* was a 6000-ton steamer which, besides being heavily laden, was down by the head with the weight of water. By 8 p.m., as night fell, they reached the Nore Light-vessel, when the S.N.O. Sheerness ordered them to anchor the stricken vessel in deep water, the tide being unfavourable for proceeding farther up the Thames.

The *Honiton*, however, was loaded with maize, and at 10 p.m. the bulkhead between No. 1 hold and the fore peak gave way under the pressure of the swelling grain and the ship commenced to sink by the head. Urgent signals brought out a salvage tug, but the length of hose required to reach the fore peak was too great to get a suction without filling the pipe first with water, and when eventually this was done the pump became defective, and by the time it was working again the suction had been lost. During this time the crews of the salvage ships were working waist-deep in the *Honiton's* holds, as she was slowly settling down, and the ropes which moored the *Daisy* and the armed trawler alongside the sinking ship were under water and could not be cut.

As soon as it was realized that nothing could be done with the salvage pump, means were now adopted to do all that was possible to save the ship (and, incidentally, the towing-ships made fast alongside from going down with her), so the cable was cut and after a very anxious and harassing time she was beached on the Maplin Sands. At the moment of grounding the *Honiton* was drawing over thirty-nine feet.

Unfortunately she broke her back before she could be salved and became a total loss. It was her maiden trip, and she was owned by a Cardiff firm.

*June 8th, 1915.*

Mr. Hewett of the *Meteor* told me another story which amply illustrates what went on during a quiet period around Harwich.

"After the Dogger Bank scrap we were fixed up at Southampton. We returned to Harwich and just carried on our routine duties. We escorted mine-layers to Borkum Flats, took mine-sweepers out to clear the war channels through which we had to proceed when going out or coming into port, and we did our regular patrols.

"Just as we returned after doing four days in and around the Bight of Heligoland we were ordered to sea again. We arrived in harbour at 4.30 p.m. and we were on our way out again at 8 p.m. During our short stay in the harbour we took aboard oil and water for the boilers and some provisions for the crew. We sailed and headed for the Sunk Light-vessel. The news got around that we were out after a 'Fritz' which had sunk two merchant ships, but we never saw a thing during the night as we dashed around hoping for the chance to ram the U–boat if we caught her on the surface while she was charging her batteries.

"When daylight came we found we were not alone on the hunt. There were quite a number of trawlers and a few of the old coal-burning type torpedo boats churning up the water looking for the Hun, and at low tide we saw the remains of a passenger ship. This ship had been sunk by a torpedo fired from another submarine some time before.

"Nothing much seemed to be doing, and as I was off watch I went below to get a few minutes' shut-eye. I had hardly settled down comfortably when I heard a loud report and felt the concussion of a heavy explosion. I didn't waste any time getting on deck. I thought we had hit a mine, but we hadn't. I saw one of the T.B.s had been either torpedoed or mined. It was No. 10 or No. 12. Another T.B. went to her assistance, and just as she started to take her in tow she got it also. Whatever it was hit her caught her right amidships, and she folded up like a jack-

knife. Both her bow and her stern went up in the air and she settled down amidships, having been broken clean in two by the force of the explosion.

"All other ships in the vicinity got a move on, and those who had them put out their submarine sweeps. It was our bad luck to get ours all tangled up just after we put it overboard and started to drag for the enemy U–boat. It was in such a mess that the Captain gave orders to cut it adrift, and we had just slowed down in order to do this when one of our crew sighted the periscope of the 'Fritz'. We tried to ram it, but did not succeed, but we kept 'Fritz' so busy dodging that the other ships got the damaged T.B. in tow and took her back into harbour."

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### *The German Navy had a "Meteor" Also*

AT ABOUT MIDDAY on August 8th, 1915, the greater part of the Harwich Force returned into harbour after a sweep of the North Sea, and had no sooner begun to settle down to make the most of a few hours spell of rest when news came through from the Admiralty that an enemy mine-layer, disguised as an innocent tramp steamer, had laid a mine-field at the entrance to Cromarty Firth, where a large force of our Fleet was based.

Having completed her nefarious mine-laying duties, she started on her homeward journey, but not before sinking H.M.S. *Ramsey* (one of our armed boarding-steamers, attached to the Examination Service at the approaches to the harbour) and arousing the suspicion of several mine-sweepers operating in the vicinity, who promptly gave the alarm.

The light cruisers of the Harwich Force were then ordered to proceed to sea with the utmost despatch and endeavour to intercept this vessel before she could regain the shelter of the German coast; so shortly after 9 p.m. the *Arethusa* (flying the broad pennant of Commodore Tyrwhitt), *Undaunted*, *Aurora*, *Conquest*, and *Cleopatra* crept out of harbour and quickly worked up to top speed. All the ships' companies were in high spirits, as nothing very exciting had taken place for several months, but there was little sleep that night, what with double watches and the throbbing and racing of the engines due to the high speed causing the ship to vibrate from stem to stern.

At daybreak the squadron (which had been in "line ahead" during the night) formed into "line abreast" and spread out five miles apart, thus giving a sighting area of

about forty miles. All went well and nothing unusual took place until about 8 a.m. (August 9th) after having steamed nearly twelve hours at full speed, when an enemy aeroplane approached ; the anti-aircraft guns were manned, but the 'plane made no attempt to attack and was wise enough not to come within range, being apparently on a reconnaissance.

The squadron was now rapidly nearing the German coast, and the *Meteor* (as she turned out to be later on) was expected to be sighted at any moment, if the estimate as to her course and speed was correct.

A short while after the seaplane's exit a Zeppelin hove in sight and made for our ships, and it was at this juncture that the Commodore signalled the squadron to spread out to as great a distance as possible without visual touch being lost of one another, this extended formation being to allow of a larger area being covered in the search for the *Meteor*.

When about twenty-five miles from Horn's Reef (on the northern edge of the German coast) the smoke of a steamer steering south was sighted on the starboard bow, and as the silhouette of this vessel made out from the crow's nest answered to the description received by wireless from Cromarty, which was vaguely "One funnel and two masts", the squadron instantly altered course so as to cut her off. Perceiving the British squadron rapidly closing, and finding herself in somewhat of a tight fix with little hope of escape, she at once altered course and headed for the land in close proximity to the Danish frontier. Shortly after this the *Undaunted* reported having been attacked by a submarine, the track of the torpedo she fired being plainly seen in the calm sea which prevailed at the time this "tin fish" fortunately passed well astern, the submarine having apparently underestimated the cruiser's speed, which at that moment was well over twenty-nine knots.

The squadron were now all heading towards the *Meteor* and gradually closing in towards each other, and it was the *Undaunted's* good fortune to get in visual touch with the enemy first ; but just as she was about to challenge and fire a shot across her bows as an order to "heave to" it

was observed that she had already stopped, and that her crew had abandoned her and taken to the boats and commenced to row as fast as they could towards a Danish fishing trawler. On approaching still closer it was seen that the now derelict mine-layer was rapidly sinking by the stern, but as the German flag was still flying the *Undaunted* opened fire with her bow 6-inch gun. The first round fell short and ricocheted over her, but the succeeding one struck her amidships, and with a loud report she blew up, throwing a sheet of flame and red-brown smoke quite 200 feet into the air. It was obvious that the *Meteor's* Captain, finding himself cornered with no possible chance of escape, decided to sink his vessel rather than be captured. The *Undaunted's* well-directed shot must have penetrated through her hull into one of the compartments where some of her mines still remained, hence the terrific explosion witnessed, which threw debris of the ill-fated vessel far and wide, and the last seen of her was the remnant of her bows as she disappeared from view below the surface.

The *Cleopatra* arrived on the scene and closed the Danish trawler to investigate. They were, to their surprise, hailed by British bluejackets, and these men were found to be the survivors of the *Ramsey*, who had been picked up out of the water by the *Meteor*. Boats were lowered from the *Cleopatra* and these officers and men were taken aboard the cruiser, together with the Captain of the *Meteor*, who was made a prisoner. It was, however, not deemed prudent to bring back the rest of the *Meteor's* crew as prisoners, as these claimed protection under the Danish flag and elected to be taken into a Danish port and interned.

From the survivors of the *Ramsey* it was elicited that they had left Cromarty early on the night of August 7th for their usual patrol area.

All went well until about 2 a.m., when a wireless message came through ordering them to stand more to the eastward—and at about 4 a.m. the *Ramsey* challenged a suspicious steamer, which did not reply, so they at once gave chase. At daylight she was overtaken and ordered to

stop, which she did. The Captain of the *Ramsey* hailed her soon after to say he intended to pass on her starboard side ; but when she got abreast the *Meteor* (which up to then had been flying the Norwegian flag) suddenly dropped her bulwarks and opened fire at the *Ramsey* with heavy artillery and machine-guns, which swept her from stem to stern ; at the same time the *Meteor* fired a torpedo, which struck the *Ramsey's* stern, blowing it half away. As she was sinking rapidly, orders were then given to "abandon ship" (four boats were lowered, but two capsized), and whilst this was being carried out, the ship being then well down by the stern, a second torpedo struck the *Ramsey* under the bridge, which tore a large hole in her hull, and she sank very soon afterwards. The *Meteor* then picked up forty-three survivors as prisoners and steamed off at full speed to the eastward.

On getting aboard, every man was given dry clothes and a peg of whisky and then placed below decks. From one of the crew they heard the *Meteor* had sown no less than 450 mines the night before.

After steaming for some time they heard several shots fired, and soon after the crew of a Danish ship were brought below ; and later in the evening they were taken on deck and saw a submarine (German) on either side of them and a Zeppelin overhead, and after an interchange of signals the *Meteor* resumed her voyage. On the following morning they were taken on deck again and told they were being chased, but would get in harbour first. However, at about one o'clock they saw five lines of smoke on the horizon, and shortly afterwards the Zeppelin which was accompanying them reconnoitring was joined by another one. A little while later the Captain of the *Meteor*, realizing that British cruisers were coming up quickly and that there was no chance of escape, brought his vessel within close proximity to a trawler then in sight and, after transferring his crew to her, placed dynamite charges with time-fuses at the bottom of his vessel, which exploded, thereby accounting for her being found in a sinking condition when the squadron caught up with her.

One can imagine how glad the survivors of the *Ramsey* were at being back again on board a British man-o'-war, and thus escaping internment in Germany for the rest of the war.

As a fitting reminder of this stirring episode, the ships' companies of the light cruisers participating in this event learnt, almost a year afterwards, that they were to receive prize money for the part they took in sinking the *Meteor*. It appears that they qualified for this pecuniary award by having fired and hit her, although, strange to relate, she was already *hors de combat* when the Force arrived on the scene.

With the advent of Zeppelins in the summer of 1915 Harwich was well to the fore as a suitable objective from the German point of view. It was a fortified naval base, and, moreover, the Harwich naval forces, which were a perpetual thorn in their side, were stationed there, so that if they could only hit some of the ships of the Force based there they naturally thought it might limit their activities for a time ! In addition, there was Parkeston Quay, which at that time was a big storehouse full of all sorts of things from torpedoes and ammunition down to fresh provisions. The Zeppelins in steering for London had to make a landfall somewhere on the east coast, and Harwich, in the event of contrary winds or any other difficulties, provided them with an alternative objective.

The result was a number of Zeppelin raids during the late summer of 1915. At this time only five light cruisers had anti-aircraft guns, while the destroyers were only supplied with Maxims on a beef-block mounting. There were also a few anti-aircraft guns belonging to the garrison and manned by them. The general scheme, therefore, when Zeppelins were reported in the vicinity was to "lie low" unless actually attacked, in the hope that failure on their part to locate Harwich by attracting its gun-fire might confuse them and cause them to lose their bearings and thus miss London.

A number of these airships passed over Harwich at

various times, without, however, dropping any bombs, being, to all intents, bound for London.

It should be mentioned that part of the Zeppelins' plans was to endeavour to make the English coast at dusk and then locate their position, following the coast down soon after darkness had set in.

Early in August the usual warning signal came through of the approach of Zeppelins and that an air raid was to be expected. There was little to do except to man the anti-aircraft guns and make certain that no lights were showing that could possibly be seen from the air.

At about 10.20 p.m. bombs were observed being dropped in two places in a north-easterly direction some ten miles off. A little later, at about 11 p.m., the anti-aircraft guns of the Harwich garrison opened fire and switched on their searchlights, and shortly afterwards a Zeppelin could be made out to the west of Harwich, over Parkeston village, coming directly towards the line of buoys where the majority of the destroyers were lying.

On this occasion they apparently had Parkeston Quay as their objective, and made a most determined attack on it and on the ships lying off it. They started by dropping two bombs on Parkeston village, where some houses were destroyed and there were several casualties. They dropped a succession of bombs at regular intervals, excellently placed and really deserving of results, although fortunately for our ships they did no damage. The first one fell twenty yards the other side of the railway station and thirty yards east of the road in some waste land ; the others just straddled the lines of buoys—one half-way between the quay and the ships at the Great Eastern head and stern mooring buoys, the next between them and the first line of destroyers, then between the first and second lines of destroyers, and finally between the latter and the Suffolk side of the River Stour.

The ships in harbour on this occasion had a unique opportunity of admiring the excellence of their bomb-dropping, but there was a prolonged wait to see if their luck would not change and allow them to get a hit. Had

they only timed their bombs to drop the fraction of a second earlier or later they would certainly have scored many a hit, as the distance between each explosion represented almost exactly the distance between each ship. However, the splashes were much too close to be pleasant, though the whole force escaped without casualties, except for the Captain's servant, who, in his excitement, forgot the gangway and the fact that the guard-rails there were down. He disappeared overboard through this gap. He was fished out none the worse for his swim just as the Zeppelin was disappearing away to the north-east on its way back to the Fatherland.

Towards the end of August 1915, Zeppelin raids on our capital began to cause a good deal of anxiety to the authorities, owing to the material damage and loss of life caused, and various schemes were considered to try to deal with the menace, one of which fell to the lot of the Harwich Force to carry out.

As already explained, it had been ascertained that these raiders usually flew at a low altitude over the sea when making for the east coast, and when land was sighted would rise to several thousand feet and follow the coast-line as far as the Thames Estuary, from which point they would head direct for London, their usual objective.

So, in view of the above facts, light cruisers of the Harwich Force were detailed in turn to patrol the east coast from Orfordness to Lowestoft, with orders to report instantly by wireless to the Admiralty and S.N.O. Harwich any Zeppelins sighted and, if possible, to take every opportunity of intercepting or destroying them.

The light cruisers participating in this patrol had been armed with the latest pattern of anti-aircraft gun (3-inch) and night-sights, and their crews had been specially trained in their use.

Nothing happened in this respect until September 18th, 1915, when, during the first watch (8 p.m. to midnight), the crew of the *Undaunted* (which was patrolling off the East Anglian coast on a pitch-dark night at a speed of twelve

knots, with all lights out and steering north) suddenly heard the burr of engines rapidly approaching and shortly afterwards a Zeppelin was sighted close to on the starboard bow. As her course was bringing her directly over the *Undaunted*, the course was slightly altered to avoid possible bombs being dropped and the order to "Open Fire" was passed down by voice-pipe to the 3-inch anti-aircraft gun aft. Seconds, which seemed more like minutes, passed by till at length the monster seemed to be touching the masts, her form casting a dark shadow all over the ship as she sped by. At last a round was fired, but with apparently no effect. The Zepp put his nose up and rose at a steep angle, being lost in the darkness before a second round could be fired.

It was ascertained afterwards that when the Zeppelin was almost overhead and the gun-layer was about to press the trigger to fire, the officer who had general control of the gun appeared from below and ordered a change in the type of shell, which unfortunately caused some delay in the darkness, and so was lost the most unique opportunity of "downing" an enemy airship that could have fallen to the lot of any ship. No such opportunity appears to have come the way of the Harwich Force again until Lieutenant-Commander E. B. Feilmann, commanding S/m E–31, shot down Z–7 on May 4th, 1916.*

*September 8th, 1915.*

The *Mansfield* and the *Meteor* left for Sheerness, and at 5 a.m. next day they sailed with the *Princess Margaret* and went to Grimsby for a load of mines. The *Princess Margaret* and the *Princess Victoria* were brand-new liners which had been built for the C.P.R. but commandeered by the Admiralty and turned into mine-layers. One of them came to a sticky end. She was blown up higher than a kite while in Sheerness, and Dame Rumour has it that she was blown up by enemy agents.

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* *By Guess and By God*, p. 228.

The mine-laying expedition left Grimsby at daylight next morning and headed over towards the enemy's coast. There were three mine-layers and six destroyers, and after they got well out to sea they were joined by light cruisers about two o'clock in the afternoon. They regulated their course and speed so that they arrived in position to lay their mines about midnight, or "lay their eggs", as the operation was generally referred to. The job was finished by Sept. 10th, and the Harwich Force escorted the mine-layers back to Sheerness. They laid nearly a thousand mines that trip.

"Submarines are getting most annoying around the Harwich approaches and they are taking a heavy toll. The *Meteor*, *Matchless*, *Murray*, and other destroyers dashed out from the Felixstowe Trot and dragged for the enemy sub. with their explosive sweeps. They are explosive all right, and should 'do in' a 'Fritz' if ever we hook into one, but this trip the *Matchless* blew off her stern while she was manœuvring around trying to get the sweep working properly. The *Meteor* put a line aboard and made fast to the cripple's bow and the *Murray* took hold of her stern in order to steer her, and then we headed back for harbour hoping fervently that 'Fritz' had beat it for home," is an extract from another diary.

All this extraordinary activity was leading up to something, and these mine-laying excursions were part of the general plan to block the English Channel to German U–boats.

The Dover Patrol had done splendid work along the coast of Belgium and had harassed the German right wing constantly until the enemy troops were forced to dig in and give up their drive for the Channel ports, and the next move was to block the Channel effectively so that the enemy submarine commerce raiders would be forced to go north round the Orkney Islands instead of creeping through the English Channel. A heavy mine barrage was therefore laid the whole length of the Belgian coast from Dutch territorial waters right west to Dunkerque.

*September 1915.*

Nets and other entanglements were stretched across the English Channel, and to prevent enemy raiding ships destroying these obstructions and defences, and sweeping up our mine-fields, it was necessary to have "The Harwich Striking Force" ever on the alert, ready to rush out to sea and strike a crashing blow against any enemy light craft which might engage in such a raid. Thus it was that never for more than a few hours at a time were these ships and their crews free from a "panic", as it was called. Every move the enemy made or planned to make was known to our higher commands in sufficient time to allow them to take preventive measures, and this is saying a great deal for the organization and work of the British Intelligence Service, so the game of "Put-and-Take" went on sometimes with weary monotony, at others with quick, hectic flashes of action which were welcomed by both officers and men.

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## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### *In the Enemy's Back Yard*

*October 1915.*

THE LIGHT-CRUISERS attached to the Harwich Force from the commencement of hostilities until the summer of 1915 were primarily acting as Captain D's ships, but in August of the same year three newly built cruisers of the "C" class, which were similar in all respects to the *Arethusa* (except for the latest improvements in armament and fire-control devices), joined the Harwich Force, and from that time became designated the Harwich Light Cruiser Squadron. These cruisers were of 3750 tons displacement, with a speed of thirty knots, and carried an armament of 6- and 4-inch guns and two twin torpedo tubes, also the latest type of anti-aircraft guns and depth charges, etc. Their construction had been greatly accelerated, as may be gathered by the fact that they were launched in January 1915, and in less than six months afterwards were in commission and on a war footing. The first of these was the *Cleopatra* (Captain Frederick P. Loder-Symonds), followed by the *Conquest* (Captain James A. Farie), the *Carysfoot* (Captain Albert P. Addison) and the *Penelope*. The Harwich Light Cruiser Squadron now consisted of seven of the most modern vessels of this class—their duties being the patrolling of the enemy's coasts, keeping the Grand Fleet informed of the enemy's movements, the perpetual harassing of the enemy, the enticing out of his heavy ships to fall into our traps, the hunting-down of his submarines and mine-layers, the convoying of merchantmen, and so forth.

The work and duties were extremely important, dangerous, and hazardous, and there was always some portion of this Force either at sea or in harbour with steam ready

at short notice in case of an emergency call. The flagship (or the S.N.O.'s ship present in harbour, whilst the former was absent at sea) was in direct telephone communication with the Admiralty, by whom all its movements were directed, so that instructions could be readily communicated without the use of wireless or codes. The strategic position of Harwich gave it the importance of being the unit of our Fleet situated the nearest to German naval bases, and for that reason it came in for a large share of the fighting there was in the North Sea.

During the cruises of the Harwich Force in the autumn of 1915 a number of trawlers were always to be seen off the Dutch coast, more especially in the vicinity of Terschelling. They all flew Dutch colours, and time did not permit, in the course of a cruise with some objective such as an air raid, for more than a rapid examination of a few of them.

In view of the numbers of Dutch fishing vessels it was impossible to carry out a thorough examination of all the trawlers encountered off Holland. However, it was observed that the fishing fleets extended a long way north of Terschelling, although, as these were usually passed at night, it was impossible to detach destroyers to examine them in that locality.

The blockade was being felt severely in Germany as regards food, so that any fishing by their trawlers was of great importance to them and any restriction of this industry which could be enforced by our ships was of great value to the blockade.

Excellent fishing grounds existed in the Little Fisher Bank and to the west of the Amrum Bank Buoy to the northwest of Heligoland and extending towards the Skagerrak. The Dutch were unlikely to use them overmuch as they would be liable to interference by both the English and German Fleets, but the Germans would probably regard them as being sufficiently near their own coast for safe fishing.

By international law, fishing vessels and their crews were

immune from capture, but as enemy ships had already made several raids on our fishing fleet and sunk some at sight, it was decided to make a retaliatory raid and to capture and bring in any German trawlers met with and to sink those which could not conveniently be taken in.

We were very short of trawlers about this time, as many had been taken up for mine-sweeping and patrol work, whilst a number had been lost, so that any captures would be most useful.

The duty of capturing these trawlers and disturbing the German fishing industry was allocated to the Harwich Force, who carried out several sweeps for this purpose at the end of September and beginning of October 1915.

The Harwich Force, consisting of all available ships, three light cruisers, and some twelve destroyers, would leave Harwich early in the morning and proceed past the Sunk Light-vessel to the vicinity of the North Hinder Light-vessel at a speed of about eighteen knots. From there course was shaped to pass well clear of Terschelling, and from thence continuing the course up the Skagerrak, passing to the west of the German mine-fields in the Heligoland Bight.

At daylight next day on this course the Harwich Force would be well to the northward of Heligoland and up to the fishing grounds, where it was intended to stop and examine all the trawlers sighted.

The weather during this period was good, and the first day passed uneventfully. A few drifting mines were sighted and these were sunk by destroyers. Few ships or trawlers were seen, as the course lay somewhat to the westward of their usual station, which was nearer the Dutch coast. During the day the destroyers formed a submarine screen for the light cruisers, and at dark they formed up in line ahead on either side of the cruiser line.

With dawn next day the screening was resumed by destroyers, and thus individual destroyers would easily be detached from the screen to board any trawler, put a prize crew on board, and rejoin the screen without much interfering with its effectiveness.

Special instructions had been issued for the operation and each destroyer had one prize crew ready. They comprised one Commissioned Executive Officer, one Petty Officer and four seamen, a Stoker Petty Officer and a stoker. A spare chart of the North Sea with the position of the ship and mine-fields marked on it, sufficient food and provisions for a few days in case of need, and a White Ensign were taken. The prize crew were armed with revolvers and carried ample ammunition, whilst the officer in charge had a copy of the secret recognition signals, and a signalling lamp was taken to use at night.

As these prize crews were mostly taken from the complement of each destroyer, it meant that only one prize crew could be spared, so that the captures were limited to one by each destroyer. The light cruisers also provided three prize crews each if required.

With daylight, speed was reduced in order to avoid straggling by the vessels boarding the trawlers, and as the raiding force had sighted a few somewhat scattered trawlers the game of stopping and examining them soon commenced. They were all flying German colours and appeared to consider they were perfectly safe fishing so near their own coasts. The appearance of the Harwich Force was a rude shock to them, though they took it very well, gave no trouble to their prize crews, and willingly worked their ships into the Humber, where the prize crews had been ordered to take all captured trawlers. In fact they were in some cases quite pleased, since, as one German skipper stated, he had only escaped being called up and sent to the front, as an order had just come into force calling up all available men between sixteen and fifty, and as he expected this would have been about his last trip before that happened, an internment camp in England was a great improvement in his prospects.

They were somewhat alarmed to start with as to how they were going to be dealt with, but as soon as they understood that if they gave no trouble and worked their ship in they would only be interned and would be allowed to

correspond with their families, they soon settled down and gave no bother.

Some of the trawlers were found to have insufficient coal for the voyage to England, so they were sunk. But in one sweep nineteen were captured and sent in and three others were sunk as they had not enough coal on board to make the crossing.

The crews of the vessels sunk were removed by the boarding destroyer and their ship scuttled with an explosive charge. Some deck-hands were also removed from the vessels sent in to avoid any risk of their retaking the ship by superior numbers.

During this operation the destroyers were detached to board the German trawlers while the light cruisers patrolled inside visual distance of all detached ships. The operation lasted until the afternoon, when the light cruisers had to carry out the boarding, due to the fact that the destroyers' available prize crews had all been requisitioned.

The Harwich Force continued to sweep to the northward during the afternoon, but nothing of interest was seen and they turned back for Harwich that evening. This took them across the track of any possible pursuit of the captured trawlers, and as they returned to Harwich by the Haisborough Channel and down the east coast they also covered the trawlers retiring direct across the North Sea to the Humber.

Aboard the captured trawlers, the prize crews at once took charge and hoisted the White Ensign, steering the compass course that should make the entrance to the Humber. The Stoker Petty Officer and the stoker took turns in charge of the engine-room and the stoker thoroughly enjoyed himself, at any rate, watching his German engineer stoke while he maintained an armed guard over him. A German deck-hand was sent to the wheel with the Petty Officer in charge of him and the rest of the Germans were mustered on deck also under guard, while the officer and the rest of his prize crew examined the trawler. Needless to say, the living conditions were far from pleasant, nor was

their food appetizing. However, as each prize crew had brought its own food reserve and there was an unlimited supply of fresh fish things were not so bad. An efficient guard was kept over the prisoners, and for the most part the prize crews had little difficulty beyond that of safely making the Humber with a German compass of very doubtful certainty. One or two crews experienced engine trouble, but they all arrived in the Humber in course of time.

By steering a westerly course they were bound to make England somewhere, and it was somewhat of a relief when they came across our own patrol vessels some way off the coast, who gave them the correct position, though they must have been considerably puzzled at first by the appearance of foreign-looking trawlers with German names in large letters on their sides and flying the White Ensign !

At the entrance to the Humber these trawlers were ordered into Grimsby, and on arrival there the prize officers turned these vessels over to the Customs and their crews to the military authorities for internment. After completion of the necessary formalities the prize crews were given railway passes and money advances and directed to return to Harwich via London by the earliest available train.

Some of the trawlers had straggled considerably on the voyage across due to engine breakdowns, and the last of the party found themselves stranded in London on their way back to Harwich, as, it being a Sunday evening, there were no late trains. The men were therefore given leave until the departure of the first train next day, and the officers repaired to a large and well-known hotel over Liverpool Street Station. Here their reception was at first distinctly cold, as they were in their oldest uniforms, only fit for rough weather at sea, and clad in sea-boots and hand-knitted woolly scarves, looking more like pirates than commissioned officers of the senior service, but explanations to the manager, who was somewhat flustered at their appearance in his highly respectable hotel, cleared the air and they spent a pleasant evening as heroes of the hour.

The actual results of the raid were very satisfactory. The enemy lost a number of valuable trawlers, in addition to the loss of their catches of fish, and were restricted in their future fishing.

Some of the trawlers were found to be in excellent condition, and immediate steps were taken to convert them for the patrol or mine-sweeping services, their value being approximately £8000 each, and their cargoes of fish, which were sold by auction the following day, fetched anything from £400 to £500 per vessel.

On the occasions of these raids the prize crews nearly all brought back with them "mementoes" (better known as "loot"), amongst these being parrots, monkeys, pigeons, canaries, dogs, and cats, and also German ensigns, binoculars, compasses, and charts. The livestock caused much amusement amongst the passengers during the train journey from Grimsby, and no doubt still more when they rejoined their ships at Harwich.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### *Loss of S/m E–17*

E–17 LEFT ENGLAND on the morning of January 5th, 1916, and proceeded through various secret channels, picking up the "marks" with an exactitude which was very satisfactory. She finally passed the last one at close quarters at about 5 p.m. and proceeded by dead reckoning to her patrol position.

The first part of the night was quite uneventful. After a look round the engines and boat generally, to see that all was well, the Captain, Lieutenant-Commander J. R. G. Moncrieffe, R.N., turned into his bunk fully clothed at about eleven o'clock. He gave orders to be called at 3.30 a.m. They were on the surface.

Lieutenant C. V. Groves, R.N.R., went up on the conning tower to relieve Lieutenant N. R. Peploe, R.N., at 1 a.m. Both officers were still up there ten minutes later, when they suddenly saw what appeared to be a white streak in the water, across the bows, about a hundred yards distant. Lieutenant Peploe guessed it was a shoal. He at once ordered the helm hard over, but the submarine struck practically before she had commenced to answer her helm.

The helm order woke Lieutenant-Commander Moncrieffe instantly, and he was up on the conning tower within a minute, but within this minute the boat had grounded twice. The first time it was only a ridge and their speed bounced them over it. After going seventy or eighty yards farther they struck again and stayed. The swell increased considerably, and it was impossible to see much, as the whole North Sea seemed to be trying to scramble on board. Huge rollers came rushing in from astern and simply spouted

over the boat, and each time this happened she was lifted up, then flung down again with a most awful crash.

The way the boat leaped about was amazing. Every now and then when a roller caught her at an angle she heeled over forty degrees or fifty degrees at least, making it very hard to stick to the bridge at all. The Captain ordered the First Lieutenant below and stayed on the conning tower with two look-out men and his navigator, Lieutenant Groves. They all had very narrow escapes from going overboard.

One particularly heavy sea took the Captain over the side. "I went over quite cleanly once, but fortunately got my arms over the wire railings as I went. The whole length of me was outside waggling in the water for a second or two, but I managed to scramble back," he said while telling the story afterwards.

After some time the Captain managed to work her off the shoals by using the engines, and just as everyone hoped their troubles were over, and the boat was moving seawards, there was a tremendous crash aft. They had hit the outer ridge—the one they had bounced over on first arriving. The heavy seas helped start the boat, and she worked her way slowly back over this ridge also. The bumps, however, were even more terrific than before. As her stern got across the ridge the point of contact between boat and shoal gradually moved forward, until she was hitting just ahead of the conning tower.

This is approximately the centre of a submarine, and the place where she pivots when resting on the ground. It had been easy at first to keep the stern pointing seaward, but as soon as the conning tower cleared the shoal the seas caught her aft and turned her broadside on. The Captain and her crew tried frantically to stop this, but it was no use, and finally she was broadside on, being driven helplessly across the ridge. Each succeeding bump jarred the crippled submarine and her crew to the core.

They tried to get the bows pointing seaward and started the turning process while they were still bumping across

the ridge, and finally she commenced coming slowly round. She came round quicker still when they cleared the ridge, and things began to look quite hopeful once more, but when they had turned about forty-five degrees the stern came down with a terrific crash. They had drifted helplessly across the intervening space and had struck on the inner bank again. The moment she touched aft, back went the bows, and once more they were broadside on, bumping and bouncing like a ball, and each time nearer the shore.

In telling of this experience after Lieutenant Moncrieffe said :

"I stuck to it for a bit over two hours—then it became obvious that I could do no more until daylight. If I could prevent her going any further shorewards, and the sea subsided, there was just a chance I might be able to escape our difficulties when I could see the lay of the shoals, so I sent everybody below, closed the conning-tower lid, and flooded all the tanks, making her heavy as possible, the idea being to reduce the crashing and also to stop her progress shorewards. This was moderately successful, and undoubtedly we bumped less violently than before."

It is easier to imagine than try to describe the nervous strain and tension these brave men were subjected to while imprisoned in their steel coffin the rest of that night.

The antics of the boat had proved too much for the lashings of one of the spare torpedoes ; the tail held firm, but the nose, with the heavy war-head in place, commenced threshing about, and would have probably exploded and blown them to smithereens had it not been rapidly re-secured.

Large quantities of water had come down the conning tower into the control-room before the Captain closed the lid. This water washed about inside the submarine and made an awful mess of things. It wet the electric light switchboards, and the police lights fused, thus starting a good-sized fire behind the switchboards, which had to be put out with one of the patent fire extinguishers. The resulting fumes of burnt indiarubber, fire-extinguisher, and

what not, made a most unpleasant combination of foul air, which the crew had to breathe for the rest of the night, bottled up as they were in the bowels of their stranded mechanical whale.

It was a terrible time, that period of waiting for the dawn. None of the crew thought the boat could last out till morning. Said one of the men who lived through the ordeal, "I takes off me hat to the men who built her." It was simply wonderful the amount of hammering she received and the amount of punishment she took.

The imprisoned men had plenty to keep them busy inside, however. The Captain made a tour of inspection. He found the rudder was missing, and the after compartment had a large hole in it, making a direct connection to the sea (probably the hole where the rudder had been). The water-tight door had been closed, but both it and the whole bulk-head had been so badly strained that they were leaking badly. The crew had to shore them up as well as possible.

Both propeller-shafts had been jolted up and down in their bearings and were visibly bent, making it very doubtful whether the engines could be used any more ; both main motors were wet with salt water and were full of earths (i.e. electric leaks) ; six or seven of the big main tanks were holed, and the hull was leaking slightly but steadily in a dozen places.

"It looks pretty hopeless," said the Captain to his juniors after completing his tour of inspection, so he started to destroy all confidential papers, charts, and instructions. The most secret documents were baked in the electric oven until brittle and then powdered up. Then the three officers held a council of war to decide what they should do in the event of their successfully refloating the boat in the morning.

They had enough respect for the German spy system to expect trouble soon after daybreak. They never doubted for a moment but that they had been observed as they were threshing about on the shoals during the night.

"When dawn came I found we were barely fifty yards from the shore, at a point about midway along the Island

of Texel. We had a clear sea behind us, no shoals showing, and the sea had gone down a lot," was the way the Captain summed up the situation at daylight, and he added :

"We were leaking pretty badly and I felt that diving would be a mighty risky experiment, not worth trying except in absolute *extremis*, when it might give about a five-to-one chance against for life.

"I was quite satisfied, however, that we could get back to England provided the weather remained good and we were not interfered with. But of the latter I could not be sure."

About 8.15 a.m. they sighted a cruiser just visible, some four miles to the southward. They did not see her arrive, but this was not surprising in view of the mist. She was steaming southward when sighted, and soon disappeared again. She must either have come out of the Helder or else come from seaward or the southward.

About 9.45 a.m. they sighted the cruiser again. She was coming back along the coast, a good bit farther out than before, and unmistakably steaming fast. There was a rain squall coming up behind her which blotted her out before they could distinguish any details, but she altered course to close the land just before going out of sight. If this was an enemy ship their position was desperate. There wasn't a man amongst the crew who didn't recall the fate of their shipmates on E–13.

The best plan seemed to be to get straight out to seaward in the hope of slipping away unobserved in the mist and rain. After blowing their ballast-tanks they backed off shore and proceeded to sea as fast as their condition allowed, but it was painfully slow work ; and as time went on they kept a very anxious eye to the southward, expecting the cruiser to reappear. However, everything seemed to be tranquil.

Suddenly, however, they spotted the cruiser again. She had altered course and was now driving up at a great rate of speed. It looked as if she meant to use the ram. She was about a mile off and just a blur, but she got clearer very quickly as she closed. The probability now seemed that she was German, but as they were really in no condition to dive

they held their course, hoping to make out something that would prove the visitor to be a friendly vessel. Being practically end-on, they couldn't get her silhouette, and her flag was hidden by the intervening masts, funnels, and bridge.

When the cruiser was a short half-mile away Moncrieffe made out the blurry outline of her guns, and saw them swinging forward. The submarine was covered at a range of less than a thousand yards.

It is an unwritten law of the sea never to train guns on warships of a nation with whom one is at peace—for obvious reasons. Therefore her action in training her guns on them at this moment proved conclusively to those in the stricken submarine that she was hostile and about to open fire. Further hesitation would have left no time to dive underneath her. To stay on the surface seemed certain death, either from gun-fire or ramming; so Moncrieffe took the one-to-five chance for life, and gave the order to dive. He afterwards recalled :

"The few minutes following my orders to dive were rather exciting. When I tried to close the conning-tower lid I found to my horror that it was jammed. By the feel of it I fancy a piece of waste or a rope-end had fouled the counterbalance weight, and tug and pull as I would, nothing happened. Finally I clambered up again to try to get at the trouble, but when I got outside I found the hull had gone under and the water was half-way up the conning tower.

"No time to do anything, so I started down again with the idea of closing the lower door. I had barely got to a position, however, where I was momentarily sitting on the edge of the hole with my hands on the conning-tower lid, when the water came. The first wave hit the lid a great smack, and most luckily broke the obstruction. My hands being on the lid, I felt it give, but before I could do anything the water was over my head. I dropped down instantly, holding on to the lid, and my weight pulled it over the centre point, after which the water pressure closed it with a bang.

"Lieutenant Groves, who left the bridge just before me,

must have been descending in very stately fashion, as he told me afterwards that he was still on the lower ladder when the avalanche of water struck him. It threw him down on his back, where he floundered, swallowing much water and thinking the end of the world had come.

"Meanwhile, the lower door had been closed in order to save the boat. Everybody down below thought I had been wiped out. Inside the conning tower it was pitch dark, and I was sealed in the small space between the lids. Thinking for a moment that the lights had gone out, I sang out to ask what was happening. To my astonishment, a quiet, respectful voice answered in my ear. One of the men had been stationed in the conning tower to repeat orders while we were on the surface, and when all this happened he very pluckily stayed where he was.

"Had he given way to panic and tried to get down below he would certainly have prevented the lower lid being closed and everybody would have been drowned. Instead of that he stood tight, waiting for what he thought was certain death, to give the others their chance," Moncreiffe said, in praise of the man's unselfish act.

"When I sang out asking about the lights, he reported what had happened below, told me the orders given, and explained that the conning tower was knee-deep with water. He said all this in a most matter-of-fact tone of voice. It sounded exactly as if he were standing to attention and saluting, and you will understand how steady he was when I tell you that although one can touch the walls of a conning tower all round without fully extending one's arms, yet I did not know he was there until he spoke. But that man was no better than the others. They all behaved magnificently throughout, and a finer lot I never hope to command.

"While I clamped down the upper conning-tower lid, I told H—— to stamp on the lower one to attract attention, and presently the water was drained off and the lower door opened. I found things pretty serious inside, for as soon as pressure came on the leaks opened up, and the boat had

[*Photo: Cmdr. C. L. A. Woollard, R.N. (Retd.), F.R.G.S., F.R.E.S.*

THE BOWS OF H.M.S. *Mentor*, AUGUST 7, 1917, AFTER HER RETURN TO HARWICH. THE *Mentor* WAS TORPEDOED OFF HORN'S REEF WHILST ESCORTING ONE OF OUR MINELAYERS

[*Photo : Cmdr. C. L. A. Woollard, R.N. (Retd.), F.R.G.S., F.R.E.S.*

PRIZE CREW (COMMANDED BY LIEUT. WOOLLARD) FROM *Undaunted* ON BOARD GERMAN TRAWLER *Doctor Krugler*

taken charge, sinking like a stone. The water inside ran aft, depressing the stern to such an angle that it was impossible to stand without holding on to something.

"It was out of the question to remain submerged—the problem was whether we would be able to get back to the surface at all. The boat had been right down and touched bottom with her tail. As she did so the door of the after compartment, mentioned before as strained, commenced to gape and give way. If she had stayed at that depth the pressure would have burst the bulkhead.

"Fortunately, however, she no sooner hit bottom than she commenced to rise again. The water blown out of the tanks was sufficient to give her a slight positive buoyancy as soon as her downward momentum was stopped.

"There was a tremendous lot of free water in the interior of the boat, and it was increasing every moment. This naturally made its way aft, completely flooding the after-torpedo compartment and even commencing to flood the engine-room, where the main motors were.

"Some of the men were literally washed away from their stations, but they all behaved like trumps. Those who were washed out stayed as near their billets as possible, ready to dive back and work their valves if I required it; and they might have been doing a routine practice dive in home waters for all the difference it made.

"There was only one sign of the unusual about them, but the impression of it remains very clear—namely that, as the men all around watched me for orders, their eyes glittered," the Captain recalled.

"The submarine began to rise very slowly, when suddenly the port main motor blew out, water having caused a short circuit."

This happened while they were at 45 feet, but she went on rising to 40 feet, then she stopped and commenced sinking again slowly. Very, very slowly the dial pointer crept down to 48 feet, checked, then went to 49 feet and 49½ feet, stopped there for a long time, then started to rise again.

This was the most nerve-racking and critical moment

of the whole show. If she had continued on down instead of up, nothing would have saved her ; she would have fetched bottom again, and the after bulkhead door would certainly have caved in. Incidentally, the line between going up and down was so fine that it was just as well that the upper conning-tower lid had been forced shut. The extra dead weight of the conning tower full of water would have been more than enough to make the difference and cause her to sink instead of rise.

Then a strange thing happened. Once she made up her mind to come up she came up with a rush, and there was nothing they could do to prevent breaking surface. They had not heard the propellers of the cruiser pass overhead, and it was obvious that she had either stopped or that she was running around, on the look-out for them somewhere pretty close.

"I thought," said the Captain, "if we had to go to glory, we might as well take her with us. So we flooded all our torpedo tubes, and the men were ordered to stand by ready to hop out and swim for it as soon as we had fired them off at the enemy."

When they broke surface they saw the cruiser lying stopped and broadside on, about four hundred to five hundred yards off—a beautiful shot.

"However, it had stopped raining," continued the Captain, "and I was astounded to see she was a Dutchman. There was no question about it ; her ensign was clearly visible, and her silhouette, which I saw for the first time, was unmistakable. So I brought the boat right up and investigated the new damages which had been caused by our enforced dive. I found our condition quite hopeless. The boat was rapidly sinking, and I signalled for help. Boats were sent over with the utmost promptitude from the cruiser, which we found when we got on board was the *Noord Brabant* of the Dutch Royal Navy. She was stationed at the Helder. We were received and treated most cordially, and both officers and men tried to show their sympathy in all sorts of ways.

"For instance, when the crippled submarine took her last plunge, just after we got on board the *Noord Brabant*, the Captain went up on the bridge to say good-bye to her. As she went down the bugle sounded the 'Attention', and the *Noord Brabant* saluted her while she died. It made a great difference to her sorely tried crew that she did not go to her grave unhonoured."

After the end they were hustled below and given dry clothes and warm drinks.

The explanation of the Duchman's conduct was as follows :

The *Noord Brabant* had put to sea that morning with a lot of young seamen on board for drill, and, following her usual custom, turned south—the moment at which those aboard the British submarine sighted her. About 9 a.m. the Captain of the *Noord Brabant* received a wireless message saying there was a foreign submarine in difficulties off Texel. He received orders to go and investigate. The Dutch cruiser came back at full speed, and when the rain caught her off the Helder she closed the shore to keep in touch with it and examine it for the, presumably, still stranded submarine.

"By pure chance," said the Captain, "she spotted us in a momentary gap in the curtain of rain, and her action of altering course and continuing at high speed right up to us was because she believed we were in a very bad way and that every moment might be of value.

"At the time all this was happening the young seamen were at gun drill, doing loading exercises, training on imaginary targets, etc. The officer in charge of the drill knew nothing of what was happening on the bridge, and in the course of their exercises the guns were trained forward on an imaginary enemy at the very moment that we came in sight ahead of them, with the result that the *Noord Brabant* appeared to be doing a thing which no peaceful man-o'-war ever does !"

Could any train of coincidences have been more unfortunate ? Had the cruiser not trained her guns forward E–17 might not have dived, and the chances are she would

have been saved the extra strain, and would probably have reached a British port instead of going to Davy Jones's locker. As it was, the crew were taken ashore and interned, and quite naturally the Captain appealed against this action by the Dutch Government.

What happened after the crew of E–17 were rescued and landed is told by her commanding officer.

"On being landed from the *Noord Brabant* at the Dutch naval port of Den Helder we were marched to the barracks called the 'Marine Kazerne', where we were quartered until the decision of internment was promulgated.

"Immediately after arriving there I was given a cup of tea and then taken before a court consisting of the Captain and Commander of the 'Marine Kazerne', and the senior submarine officer at Den Helder. This court cross-examined me upon our shipwreck and the events leading up to it. I had a bad headache and was utterly worn out ; in fact, I fell asleep twice while under the examination.

"At that time I was unaware of any danger of internment and understood that the court was simply desirous of asking a preliminary inquiry to ascertain that E–17 had not entered Dutch territorial waters with belligerent intent, such as mine-laying, etc., nor been driven in by hostile action. I had had a few moments in which I had consulted with my officers, and there did not appear to be any object in emphasizing the *Noord Brabant's* share as a contributory cause in the loss of E–17. We felt that to harp on this would be gratuitous discourtesy immediately after the kindly treatment we had received on board, and that it could all be gone into at the subsequent trial, if necessary."

"Consequently I confined myself to narrating what I could in explanation of the wrecking of E–17 and our subsequent actions, trying to parry the frequent questions into confidential matters—especially the technical ones shot in at intervals by the submarine officer.

"After this the First Lieutenant and navigator underwent a short examination, while I went and saw that the men were all right ; then we all went to bed.

"Next afternoon, when we woke up, we found that there was grave danger of our being interned under Article 13 of the Tenth Hague Convention of 1907, and that the enquiry of the day before was not a preliminary examination at all, but that it was the sole opportunity we were to be given of putting up a defence.

"I asked at once to see the Captain of the 'Marine Kazerne', and explained to him that I had a defence, outlined it, and asked for an opportunity to make a further statement. He communicated with Admiral Naudin-ten-Cate, the Commander-in-Chief at Den Helder ; and I was informed that the evidence had been completed and sent to the Hague, but that if the decision was against us I would be able to protest subsequently. This was not satisfactory, of course, so I asked to be allowed to go to the Hague at once to see the British Minister, offering my temporary parole while I should be doing so. This was refused, but I was told that I would be allowed to go if I gave a parole which should remain effective for the period of the war should a decision of internment be made. I said this was impossible, since it was my duty, as well as my desire and intention, to try to escape if I were held a prisoner. But, I added, since the two nations were friendly, surely so reasonable a request as to see the representative of my own country could not be refused ? Therefore, as an alternative, would they send me up under an armed escort ?

" 'No !'

" 'Then might I telephone ?'

" 'No !'

"Finally I obtained permission to see the local British Vice-Consul in the presence of a Dutch naval officer.

"I was also permitted to telegraph to the British Minister for instructions regarding parole, the Dutch having informed me that they believed instructions had been issued by the British authorities to the interned in Holland forbidding them to escape and recommending them to give parole. Afterwards I found that such an order *had* been issued about a fortnight previously, but the British Minister at the Hague

did not answer my telegram, so we obtained no guidance in that way.

"The interview with the Vice-Consul was equally unsatisfactory. This gentleman was a Dutchman, and his knowledge of English was so imperfect that it became necessary to utilize the services of the attending naval officer as interpreter. The Vice-Consul would do nothing, and bombarded me with platitudes and remarks such as that the Dutch were a very just nation, and that if I would only have patience everything would come right and all would be for the best. Finally, in despair, I requested him to advance me forty pounds to buy shirts, collars, soap, and other necessities for myself and my men. He said he was unable to do this without authority from the Consul General at Rotterdam, but that he would *write* and ask about it. It is worth noting, perhaps, that the Consul General at once *telegraphed* his answer in the affirmative.

"Almost simultaneously with the arrival of the decree of internment I received a letter from Commodore Henderson at Groningen. In this letter he informed me officially that the Admiralty *had* issued orders forbidding prisoners to escape from Holland and recommending them to give parole. My officers and I at once gave parole and went up to the Hague by the next train, the men having been sent to Groningen internment camp the previous day.

"On arriving at the Hague we went straight to the British Legation to consult the British Minister. The British Minister said that he supposed we wanted to make a protest against our internment, but that as he was just going out to dinner he could only spare five minutes. I told him as much as I could of what had occurred, but it was only a partial narrative, as he was evidently afraid of being late for his meal, and kept on interrupting to say that we must admit he knew more about international law than we did, and that we had no case—no case at all. Finally he said (verbatim), 'My good boy, you surely do not imagine that His Majesty's Ministers have nothing better to attend to than footling little arguments of *that* sort?'

"After that there was no more to be said for the moment, so the interview terminated, and we left the legation feeling rather stranded, since we were given no offer of assistance of any sort. Fortunately, a Dutch naval officer had travelled up with us from Den Helder and had asked us to dine with him. He proved a veritable Good Samaritan, finding us an hotel, lending us money, and showing us the shops, et cetera.

"I had been unable to send home my report on the loss of E–17 from Den Helder, as everything I wrote was scrutinized by the Dutch authorities. So I now proceeded to do this, submitting that a protest might be made against the Dutch decision if their Lordships saw fit. Before seeing us the British Minister had already telegraphed to Sir Edward Grey stating that he 'presumed' we would be interned under Article 13 of the Tenth Hague Convention, 1907. No doubt this was followed by a letter to the same effect and resulted in some difference of opinion between the Admiralty and the Foreign Office on the subject. Finally, however, the British Minister at the Hague received a telegram directing him to make a protest.

"Meantime, I had been preparing a defence in case the Admiralty decided to take the matter up. In this I was assisted most energetically by several members of the Belgian Legation, since my own only told me I was being a nuisance.

"The defence was in two parts. Firstly, that the *Noord Brabant* had been a contributory and final cause in the loss of E–17. I prepared this part with the assistance of the Belgian Legation, who advised me to put it shortly, as I was sure to be called before the Commission, if one sat. In view of the previous action of the Dutch, I was nervous about this, but eventually we compromised with a rather full summary which mentioned everything, but very obviously called for personal examination from anybody who was really going into the matter.

"The second part was a long, technical argument against the legality of the solitary Article under which we

were interned. This latter Article is very faulty in construction, and owing to its wording has a far wider scope than was intended. So much so that the British representative at the Convention wished to have either the wording altered or the Article deleted. Being overruled, however, he refused to sign it, in which action he was supported by Italy, Serbia, and Montenegro. The Article, therefore, stands unsigned by four of the allied belligerents.

"This part of the defence was prepared by a Belgian expert on international law, and he was commissioned to do it for me by the Belgian Legation.

"When the order to make a protest arrived the British Minister left the Hague and went into the country for a few days, but the First Secretary took a lot of trouble to write a good covering letter for conveying the protest and defence to the Dutch Foreign Minister. The British Minister returned in time to sign this letter, but does not appear to have taken any steps to direct matters into the right channel. Consequently, instead of a naval—or partially naval—board being appointed to investigate the matter, the Commission was composed of five international lawyers, three of whom were notoriously rabid pro-Germans and one mildly so !

"This Commission sat for nearly two months, but finally turned the protest down. They dealt with the professional side of the case in about two lines—in effect saying that there was no provision in the Article for exceptional circumstances, and therefore exceptional circumstances need not be considered. No witnesses were called, and they do not appear to have given this part of the case any consideration whatsoever.

"However, they seem to have enjoyed themselves over the legal technicality of the second part of the defence, and there were about a dozen pages of arguments for contraverting what the Belgian legal expert had to say. Their main point seems to have been that Holland made a proclamation at the beginning of the war declaring that she would govern her actions as a neutral by the Articles of the Hague Conventions, and that therefore it was immaterial

whether the belligerents had agreed to any one particular Article or not.

"When this decision of the Dutch Government had been considered in England, the Admiralty sent me the following letter :

*Admiralty,*
*18th April, 1916.*

*Sir,*

*I am commanded by My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to inform you that, having decided that they cannot further contest the decision of the Netherland Government to intern the officers and crew of H.M. Submarine E–17, they desire to inform you that your conduct, and that of the officers and crew, after the grounding of H.M. Submarine has merited their approbation.*

*The abandonment of the vessel was justified, and the crew acquitted themselves well in trying circumstances.*

*The officers and men concerned should be so informed.*

*I am,*
*Your obedient servant,*
*(Signed) W. Graham Greene.*

*Lieutenant-Commander John R. G. Moncrieffe, R.N.*

The following is an account of events in Holland, from the time of the adverse decision on the first protest up to the signing of the Armistice with Germany, in Commander Moncrieffe's own words :

"I had no chance of doing anything further until the beginning of the next year (1917). Meantime, the British Minister had been recalled and Sir Walter Townley had relieved him. Sir Walter was most kindly and sympathetic about my position, and promised to take any opportunity that arose to reopen our case. He also went into the case very thoroughly with me, so as to have it all clear in his mind if the chance should come suddenly.

"Early in 1917 the Captains of two interned German submarines gave their parole, and on being enlarged

from their detention fortress went straight over the border into Germany. Holland, of course, protested, demanding their return. Germany returned an evasive answer about a month later. I had been watching the papers for this, and instantly went and saw Sir Walter, asking him to suggest to the Dutch Foreign Minister that when Holland made her further protest, as she was certain to do, she should state that unless the parole-breakers were returned a corresponding number of British submarine Captains would be released (viz. myself and the Captain of H-6). Sir Walter thought this was a good idea, and saw the Dutch Foreign Minister, who was very entertained at first, but afterwards grew serious and finally said he would carry out the suggestion. He also promised Sir Walter that he would release us if the two Germans were not returned.

"When I heard this I partially packed my gear, as I felt convinced that Germany would not give way, owing to the greater relative value to her of additional submarine officers.

"Meantime, Germany had been protesting very strongly against the internment of these same two submarines. Such heavy pressure was brought to bear that Holland partly gave way and conceded an international court to adjudge matters.

"Unfortunately, the evidence of the parole-breakers was required by this court, and no doubt it would have prejudiced the case very badly if these officers had been absent for such a reason. They were, therefore, sent back, and again I had to wait and watch for a chance.

"The two German submarines were undoubtedly clear cases for internment, but the international court which tried them consisted of a German, a Dutchman, a Swede, an Argentinian, and, as president, a Dane. The last-named was reputed to be really neutral, the German and the Dutchman represented their own interests. Of the other two one was the naval attaché at Berlin, and the other was very pro-German also.

"Even this court, however, could not see their way

to release both vessels, but about the end of July their decision was announced, by which U B-30 was released, while the internment of U B-6 was confirmed. Sir Walter immediately asked for a reopening of E-17's case, stating the professional side of my case at some length. The Dutch Foreign Minister said he had never heard this. Then he corrected himself and said that at least he had never understood it, but that now he certainly considered it furnished very good grounds for reopening the case, and that the Dutch Government would raise no objections.

"Sir Walter telegraphed this to our Foreign Office. After some time he telegraphed again, and finally wrote.

"Meantime I proposed to Sir Walter that if an international court tried the case we should follow the construction of the last court as closely as possible, keeping the Dane as a true neutral, but substituting the Norwegian naval attaché in London for the attaché in Berlin. The pro-German could remain since, in the meantime, the famous 'sink without trace' exposures had taken place, and his stand-point had changed very considerably.

"In August, as no communication had been received from the Foreign Office, I applied for leave to England (periodical leave). This was granted, and crossing at the beginning of September I went straight to the Admiralty. I found the Admiralty very indignant about E-17's internment. They were strongly of the opinion that an injustice had been committed and were willing to back me to the utmost in my efforts to get the case retried. They communicated with the Foreign Office, and a few days later the Foreign Office telephoned to me making an appointment.

"As a result of this interview the Foreign Office representative informed me that they had not thoroughly understood the case previously, but that now they certainly considered the case worth reraising on its merits, and that they would ask the Admiralty for a 'letter of instructions'.

"I took this message across to the Admiralty in order to save delay.

"Both Admiralty and Foreign Office refused to consider an *international* court, as the official attitude was 'on principle' against such commissions. However, it was agreed that the Dutch were to be approached to reraise the case for trial before a Dutch Naval Commission. I would have preferred an international court, especially as outlined ; but the main thing was to get a *naval* court, so I was quite satisfied.

"The Foreign Office said that the moment was unpropitious, because the Dutch were very incensed at that time at our reprisals over the 'sand and gravel' question. This was the position in October 1917.

"Thereafter, I communicated periodically with the Foreign Office to enquire whether the Dutch were in a good temper yet, but it was not until approximately March 1918 that I received a letter to say that the favourable moment had arrived, and that Sir Walter had been instructed to approach the Dutch Government on the subject of a retrial before a Naval Commission.

"Ten days later the Allies commandeered the Dutch shipping.

"Knowing this was about to happen, Sir Walter very wisely held up matters for a more genuinely favourable moment. I had been in England all this time owing to my having been laid up first with ptomaine poisoning and then with appendicitis and operation. On May 4th I returned to Holland.

"Meanwhile the British had been making many concessions to the Dutch in connection with the question of their East Indian convoy. So at the beginning of June 1918 Sir Walter broached the question of reopening E–17's case.

"After suitable diplomatic delays the Dutch, on July 21st, made official agreement, but at the last moment stated that what they were agreeing to was an international court.

"After further correspondence and delays, on August 20th they gave way on this point. Having agreed to a Dutch Naval Court, however, they declared that the court was to be held in the form of a court martial to try the Captain of the *Noord Brabant* for 'culpable negligence'.

If the charge was substantiated against him, the officers and crew of E–17 were to be automatically released—and *vice versa.*

"This was naturally objected to as being an impossible judgment to ask for in view of the construction of the court, and as being very much in the nature of a red herring across the track.

"It is also interesting to note that it was the Dutch Minister of Marine who was insisting upon the Commission taking this form. This Dutch Minister of Marine was Admiral Naudin-ten-Cate, who had been Commander-in-Chief at Den Helder when we were wrecked, and was the officer who refused me both a further hearing prior to the decision of internment and also any opportunity of communicating with the British Legation.

"The ensuing interviews and correspondence were interminable, and always after a letter diplomatic etiquette insisted on a lapse of ten to fourteen days before an answer could be pressed for. The Dutch took full advantage of this etiquette each time, whereas Sir Walter's replies were generally by return post or messenger. This was happening at the time of the great Dutch Government crisis in the summer of 1918, when for several months there was no Ministry. The outgoing Foreign Minister, Jonkheer Loudon, was carrying on until a new man should be appointed ; and after he had been relieved he admitted quite candidly, but privately and verbally, to Sir Walter that he had deliberately spun out the negotiations about E–17 until his successor should take office, as he personally wanted to avoid the complications that would inevitably ensue with Germany in the event of the Commission deciding upon our release—a decision which he regarded as more than possible after studying the British statements.

"At one time it appeared as if the whole matter was going to end in a deadlock, but eventually an agreement was come to, the new Dutch Foreign Minister being mainly instrumental in overcoming the opposition of the Dutch Minister of Marine. The court was to be a purely professional

(i.e. naval) one, and was to confine itself to investigating the circumstances of the loss of E–17 irrespective of the 'culpability' of the Captain of the *Noord Brabant*. The charge to the court, as finally agreed upon, could not have been more satisfactory if we had framed it ourselves, viz. (*a*) did the *Noord Brabant* commit an error, or errors, of manœuvre in the course of her approach to the E–17, such as to give the latter reasonable grounds for suspecting her to be a hostile vessel?—and (*b*), if so, had this any bearing upon the loss of the submarine and to what extent?

"The officers to sit on the Commission were appointed and their names communicated to the British naval attaché. They were eminently satisfactory.

"The Commission was to commence sitting on Monday, November 18th, 1918—and . . . the armistice with Germany was signed on November 11th, just seven days earlier!

"Whereupon the whole matter was dropped."

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### *The Loss of the "Arethusa"*

*February 1916.*

THE EARLY PART of this month is typical of the conditions experienced by men who served in the Harwich flotillas. At 3 a.m. on the morning of February 2nd some of the destroyers were rushed to sea to try to find, and, if possible, finish off, a Zeppelin which was reported damaged and flying back towards Germany at extremely low elevation. The *Meteor*, which had just returned from a refit, broke one of her fans ; but it didn't matter a whole lot, because they didn't find the Zeppelin, and they got back in harbour about eight o'clock that night.

On Sunday, February 6th, the general order to raise steam was made, and the atmosphere became charged again like just before an electrical storm. Everyone seemed convinced that something big was going to happen. Then the expected order came, and the sleek grey forms stole silently and quickly to sea. They made a rendezvous near the Maas Lightship at about 6 a.m. on February 7th, and picked up some other destroyers and made a sweep, looking for enemy ships, but drew a blank. About one o'clock in the afternoon they were ordered to return to Harwich, but just before daylight on Wednesday morning they were ordered out to sea again. They searched wearily for the evasive enemy, seeing nothing, but expecting the fun to begin any minute. At midnight they received an urgent message to return to Harwich, and were ordered to complete with fuel with all despatch. So back to port they raced once more, arriving early on Thursday morning. They went right alongside the tenders to fill up with fuel, and the Captains of all destroyers were ordered to keep steam for half-hour notice, which meant "be ready to sail immediately". At midnight on Thursday they rushed out to sea

again, but were ordered back again at 9 a.m on Friday. As one bewhiskered A.B. put it, "They were playing silly beggars six times up."

The wind was blowing a small gale and the seas were growing bigger every minute. As the destroyers raced for Harwich they buried their forecastles right into the water until only the bridges were showing. They were a formidable-looking force—about three dozen light cruisers and destroyers—as they ploughed along after patrolling off the east coast ready to intercept another enemy raid which our Intelligence Department said was planned against Yarmouth. But with the passing of darkness the danger lifted for another day, and at about 10 a.m. on the morning of February 11th they turned and steamed past Orfordness, well inside of our own mine-field, and shaped a course for the Cork Light-vessel off Felixstowe. They passed to the east of the Cutler shoal-buoy, and proceeded down the swept channel towards Harwich. The weather was so bad that there was a heavy sea running even inside the Sunk Sands shoals.

The ships were proceeding in line-ahead formation, with the flagship *Arethusa* leading her brood. The light cruisers followed her, and the destroyers of the Ninth and Tenth Flotillas brought up the rear. There was just about one thought in everybody's mind. They would be in harbour in time for their evening meal. . . . They would be able to change into warm, dry clothing and turn in for a good night's rest. And then it happened. . . . The swept channel was not clear of mines. It had been swept thoroughly, but an enemy mine-laying submarine had followed the mine-sweepers and mined it all over again just as soon as the sweepers had finished their task. With a suddenness that was most disconcerting, when they were within a short distance of home, only a few cables away from the south-east Cutler buoy, the flagship *Arethusa* hit a mine. The mine exploded with such terrific force that eleven men were killed in the port-side boiler-room and many more were put *hors de combat*. The gallant fighting ship was completely out of action.

The wind and sea began to drive the crippled ship

towards the Cutler shoals. Commodore Tyrwhitt, thinking, as always, of the safety of others before his own, ordered the valuable light cruisers to proceed into harbour. He naturally thought at the time that his ship had been torpedoed by an enemy submarine, because the channel had been reported swept clear of mines such a short time previously. He ordered some of the fast destroyers to circle round and hunt for the suspected enemy submarine, while the *Lightfoot* tried to pass a tow-line aboard the badly crippled flagship.

The *Lightfoot's* task was far from easy with such a heavy sea running, but she carried out the evolution in first-class style, and took aboard the *Arethusa's* four-and-a-half-inch towing hawser, only to be disappointed a few moments later when it parted just as if it were made of strands of cotton thread. The situation was rapidly becoming worse. The *Arethusa* was water-logged and became heavier every passing moment. The four-and-a-half-inch towing wire had gone, and the heaviest wire carried by the destroyers was three and a half inches. However, one was passed aboard by the *Loyal*, but just when their hopes were highest it snapped like a carrot. The *Arethusa* was doomed, and the destroyers had to stand by and see their flagship pounded unmercifully by the waves on the Cutler shoals until finally her back was broken.

There was nothing more to be done, so the Commodore ordered, "Abandon ship." This is the hardest and most heart-breaking order any Captain is ever called upon to issue, and the destroyers lowered away their whalers and took the crew off the crippled and stranded flagship. This work of rescue was not an easy task, and unfortunately two of the flagship's crew were drowned when the waves overturned the Carley raft. In some way they became entangled in the netting which secured the bottom boards and failed to extricate themselves.

Unbeknown to their shipmates, two stokers had been imprisoned down below in the boiler-room when the mine exploded, and finding every exit closed by wreckage and twisted steel, they knew they were doomed if they stayed below. Rather than die without putting up a good

fight, they decided to enter the funnel through the up-take. This they succeeded in doing, and those engaged in the work of rescue saw two men emerge from the top of the funnel black as coal. It is sad to relate that one of these stout fellows died of burns and the other went out of his mind as the result of his terrible experience.

Commander Barry Domvile, who since his transfer from H.M.S. *Miranda* had captained the *Arethusa* and so gallantly fought her under the leadership of Commodore R.Y. Tyrwhitt, had obtained special leave to get married at this time, and was away enjoying his honeymoon when his ship met its fate.

Attempts were made to salvage the *Arethusa* for fully three months, but without success, and they were finally abandoned. The salt-encrusted wreck could be seen by all ships coming in and going out of harbour—a grim reminder of the risks they ran when they went down to the sea in their ships.

Thus this gallant fighting ship left her bones on the treacherous sands. On a brass plate fixed in a conspicuous place on her quarter-deck were the words which were penned in praise of another *Arethusa*, one of her forerunners. This plate was placed by special permission of the Lords of the Admiralty at the time they dubbed her the "*Saucy Arethusa*". The words were these :

Come, all ye jolly sailors bold,
Whose hearts are cast in honour's mould,
While English glory I unfold.
Hurrah for the *Arethusa* !

Her men are staunch
To their favourite launch ;
And when the foe shall meet our fire,
Sooner than strike we'll all expire
On board the *Arethusa*.

Some say a tear rolled down the cheek of that quiet but brave man who commanded her as he stepped off her deck for the last time and transferred his flag to the *Cleopatra*, and if there was it was a tear of which no man need feel ashamed.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

"*God Gave the Sea to England, and She Must Keep It Free*".

*March 1916.*

THE LAST FEW DAYS of February were typical North Sea weather, cold, wet, and miserable. The 2nd Division of "L" class destroyers rushed to sea on Sunday, February 27th, and the *Llewellyn* came lame-ducking it back to port. She had been in collision with one of our own ships and had been struck just abaft the forecastle. The *Meteor* and her division were ordered out to sea at 2.45 a.m. There was an air of general uncertainty occasioned by the many signals received and the rapid changes of plans. Once more the crews wondered why, having been rushed to sea, they were ordered back into harbour again. One of the most frequent expressions heard along the lower deck was, "I wonder what the b—— hell is going on. You'd think we were ruddy Jack-in-the-boxes the way they make us jump here and rush there."

Out again Tuesday, February 29th. This time some of the destroyers proceeded to Sheerness and picked up mine-sweepers, which they escorted to sea. These useful little fellows swept a wide channel clear of mines before our light cruisers and destroyers took the mine-layers out to lay their eggs. The enemy torpedo boats, hiding in the harbours of Zeebrugge and Ostend, would every now and again make a quick dash out to sea and attack them, and then dash back again even more quickly until they got under the protection of their heavy artillery which was placed along the coast, and it was the exception rather than the rule if a week went by without one or more of the Harwich and Dover Patrol vessels exchanging shots with the enemy or getting involved in a regular dog-fight.

Just to illustrate what life was really like during these days at the beginning of March, I will quote extracts from a diary :

*Wednesday, March 1st.* Up anchor and out to sea at 6 a.m. Proceeded with mine-sweepers to Sheerness. Oiled and remained for the night alongside Port Victoria.

*Thursday, 2nd.* Left jetty and tied up at buoy. Drew stores all day. A German sub. was blown up just outside.

*Friday, 3rd.* At sea again escorting mine-sweepers.

*Saturday, 4th.* Same thing again.

*Sunday, 5th.* Same thing again.

*Monday, 6th.* Went out protecting sweepers, but everyone recalled at 9 a.m. Ordered to Harwich. Everyone convinced something big about to happen. Arrived at 12.30 and oiled immediately. Kept fire lit all day and night. Steam for half-hour notice. We are all wondering what is going to happen.

*Tuesday, 7th.* Swept from Cork Light-vessel to Sunk L.-v., *Spanker* and *Seagull* were the sweepers. Weather rotten. The sweeps parted and got wrapped round screw of *Spanker*. She dropped her anchor, but dropped it right on top of a mine. The mine-sweepers have a lousy job of work to do, and I don't envy them, not by a damn' sight.

While boats were helping rescue the crew of the *Spanker* the *Conquett* blew up. Only about seventeen saved. When we returned to harbour we were ordered alongside of the wall for boiler-cleaning. Three cheers ! . . . This will take about three days.

*Friday, 10th.* Nothing seems to be going right at this particular time. All boats ordered to sea at 8 a.m. Don't know what it is all about, but *Miranda* and *Lennox* collided and had to return for repairs. They went alongside H.M.S. *Dido*.

*Tuesday, 14th.* In and out again.

*Wednesday, 15th.* At sea. Ordered back in and oiled. Took up our station at the Felixstowe stand-by Trot. There is something in the wind. That is certain . . . wish I knew what it was . . . like to get it over with and off my chest.

*Thursday, 16th.* Dutch mail-boat torpedoed outside. Rushed off at full speed right through heavy fog banks. (People would not wonder why we have collisions if they

worked boats in this kind of weather.) Got to position. Found two Dutch torpedo boats and a cargo boat standing by. Lifeboats all over the place. All hands were saved—492 all told. Some were on board the North Hinder Light-vessel. The *Meteor*, *Morris*, *Manly*, and *Milne* were the four boats sent out. We returned to harbour at noon.

*Friday, 17th.* This is St. Patrick's Day. We were organizing a ship's concert, but instead we are ordered to sea. We joined up with mine-sweepers and cruised around all night. Dark as the inside of a cow . . . couldn't see your hand in front of you. . . . I'd like to meet the bloke who said, "Join the Navy and see life."

*Saturday, 18th.* We picked up sweepers at 6 a.m. Regular routine until 4.30 p.m. Submarine reported in vicinity. *Morris* and *Milne* put out their anti-submarine explosive sweeps. They hooked on to something and exploded their sweeps. Hope they got that perishing Hun. We stood by sweepers. Zeps flying around all night.

*Sunday, 19th.* Picked up mine-sweepers and returned to Sheerness harbour. 6 p.m. left again. 7 p.m. anchored off the *Nore* L.-v.

*Monday, 20th.* Weighed anchor 4 a.m. Dropped the hook again at 7 a.m. with other destroyers. Eight more join us at 7.30 a.m. Perhaps this time it means something doing.

Then it comes. "Proceed at thirty knots H.M.S. *Lance* engaged with the enemy." When we reached her it was too late. The enemy had retired and the *Lance* had four wounded aboard. Patrolled up and down the Dutch coast all night. All hands closed up at action stations. We expected the fun to start any minute.

*Tuesday, 21st.* Returned to harbour . . . washout.

*Thursday, 23rd.* Received orders 6 p.m. to be duty boat tomorrow.

*Friday, 24th.* Slipped from the Trot and proceeded to sea. This time we are accompanied by all light cruisers and destroyers and the *Vindex* seaplane-carrier is with us. Certain this stunt means another air raid on the enemy coast, but weather doesn't look promising.

This is where we will leave off the notations in Mr. Hewett's diary and take up the story as told by Commander C. L. A. Woollard, who was aboard the *Undaunted*, which ship took a very active part in the raid.

The air raid upon the Zeppelin hangars at Tondern, in Schleswig-Holstein, to the eastward of the Island of Sylt, on Saturday, March 25th, 1916, provides without doubt a narrative of one of the most thrilling raids on record. It was even more daring than the famous Christmas Day raid on Cuxhaven on account of its boldness in approaching so close to the German coast in broad daylight and running added risks of entering the enemy's mine-fields or being surrounded or annihilated by a superior force.

As already mentioned, this was by no means the only air raid of its kind that had been planned and attempted since 1914.

Much secrecy and reticence was observed in connection with these projected raids and their preparations, and with the exception of the Commodore and his staff, and the Captains of the light cruisers and the senior officers of the destroyer flotillas, a good many of the ships put out to sea under sealed orders. It was essential that no information of any kind leaked out, and it was mainly due to this that the public seldom heard of these operations. Harwich being at this time a restricted military area, no one, officer or civilian, was allowed in or out of the boundary line without a pass, and all correspondence, both ashore and afloat, was rigorously censored, thus making it difficult for news to leak out.

It had come to the knowledge of our Intelligence Department that the base for the majority of the Zeppelins which bombarded London and the east coast was at Tondern, a small town situated on the mainland, sheltered on the westward by the Island of Sylt, and accordingly plans were made to attack this base by aircraft in the hope of destroying the hangar and its airships as soon as a spell of fine weather seemed probable.

Eventually the weather forecast proved favourable enough for "The Harwich Striking Force" to set out to attack the lair

of these Zeppelins, and accordingly on the night of March 23rd, 1916, the best part of the Harwich Naval Forces, under the command of Commodore Tyrwhitt, raised steam at short notice and hurriedly steamed out of the harbour, escorting a seaplane-carrier. The plan of operations had been drawn up on a greater scale than hitherto, and the raiding force consisted of the light cruisers *Cleopatra* (flagship), *Undaunted*, *Penelope*, and *Conquest*, twenty-four destroyers (three divisions), and the *Vindex*, one of our fastest seaplane-carriers.

After having cleared the harbour defences, speed was increased to twenty knots, and one division of destroyers, with the *Mansfield* as senior officer's ship, proceeded independently ahead at superior speed for the southernmost extremity of Sylt Island in order to reconnoitre and, if possible, draw the attention of the enemy's air, surface, and under-surface craft to that quarter the night before in the hope that the raiding force would be able to carry out their plans without being detected. This division reached its rendezvous that night without mishap, but at daybreak (while the main forces were concentrating some sixty miles farther north for the purpose of putting their plans into effect) they sighted and attacked four German patrol vessels, sinking two of them. The *Laverock* and *Medusa* unfortunately collided with each other as they were in the act of picking up survivors from these trawlers, the *Laverock's* stem holing the *Medusa* badly in the engine-room and putting her engines out of action, which necessitated her being taken in tow, and this the destroyer *Lightfoot* carried out in record time. The other two German armed trawlers were pursued by the remainder of the *Mansfield's* division to within range of the guns on the forts of Sylt Island and the port of List, and unfortunately the alarm was given.

Whilst these events were taking place the main squadron had arrived at "A" rendezvous, twenty miles off Graadyb Lightship, at dawn on Saturday, March 25th. The *Vindex* and *Cleopatra* then stopped and hoisted out five seaplanes, whilst the remainder of the force formed a screen and steamed round them until all the seaplanes had flown off, it being then about 5.35 a.m. This task completed, the whole squadron steamed in

a southerly direction to "B" rendezvous, which was the pre-arranged position for picking up the seaplanes after they had carried out their attack on the airship sheds, their return being timed for approximately 8 a.m.

Scarcely an hour had elapsed after the departure of the raiding seaplanes before the supporting ships were attacked by German aircraft. First came half a dozen or so taubes, each dropping in turn its supply of bombs over them ; none of the missiles, however, scoring a hit. Having exhausted their ammunition, they turned landwards, no doubt in order to replenish their supplies. Three Zeppelins then came in sight and approached, apparently reconnoitring and watching the squadron's movements, but none came near enough for gun-fire to be effective. A second aeroplane (taube) attack followed swiftly after this, but no hits were recorded.

In the meantime our forces were anxiously awaiting the return of the seaplanes, as it was now past eight o'clock, and it was not until half an hour later that the first returned and was safely hoisted on board, another turning up shortly afterwards. They had both reached their objective without incident and claimed to have done considerable damage to several military points of significance at Tondern, but had been attacked by enemy aircraft and pursued part of the way back, later on experiencing great difficulty in finding the squadron again owing to a dense snowstorm. They reported having seen nothing of the three missing machines, but thought possibly they might have lost their bearings in the snowstorm. As their supply of fuel was expected to last out until about ten o'clock, it was decided to patrol in the vicinity until that time in the hope of their putting in an appearance. The wind in the meantime was rapidly increasing with a falling glass, and all hopes having been abandoned for their safe return, the squadron then shaped a course in the direction of the east coast of England.

Owing to the weather having become stormy towards the end of the afternoon, and also to the fact that the raiding forces were expecting a torpedo attack from German destroyers during the night, it was decided to give up the idea of towing the *Medusa* and to scuttle her instead, so accordingly a dynamite charge was fastened to the inlet valves in the engine-room and

exploded, the destroyer *Lassoo* running alongside (a fine piece of seamanship in such a sea) and safely taking off all her crew without mishap. The destroyers, with their flotilla leaders and the seaplane-carrier, were then ordered to return to Harwich, whilst the light cruisers altered course and proceeded to the north-west.

Just before dark Commodore Tyrwhitt signalled the light cruisers to "form single line ahead", warning them at the same time to keep a special sharp look-out for enemy destroyers, as several divisions had been sighted by our patrol submarines steaming at high speed and sweeping out to the westward.

All went well until about 10.20 p.m., the sea having by then somewhat increased, when suddenly, two points on the starboard bow, sparks were observed in the darkness coming from the funnels of a number of vessels apparently steaming at high speed on a converging course.

There was not the slightest doubt but that these vessels were foes, since the remainder of the squadron, consisting of the seaplane-carrier and the destroyer flotilla, had been ordered to return to Harwich independently at dusk and should have been by now at least fifty miles to the southward. Then, again, all our ships burnt oil fuel, and as the sparks emitted from these craft undoubtedly proved they were burning coal there was little doubt but that they were enemy ships. It was a pitch-dark night and blowing almost a gale, and as they were then steaming at about twenty-two knots they were almost smothered by heavy spray, which drenched those on deck to the skin and at times almost obliterated their vision.

The flagship *Cleopatra* was leading the line, whilst the *Undaunted* followed two cables astern (roughly two hundred yards) with the *Conquest* and the *Penelope* keeping station astern of the *Undaunted*. The enemy forces could scarcely have been a thousand yards away and were rapidly approaching, so that there were but a few seconds in which to decide how to act. It was a tense, hair-raising moment! Immediately after having sighted the enemy, both the flagship and the *Undaunted* opened a rapid independent fire at what was almost point-blank range, and very shortly after this the flagship put her helm "hard aport". Scarcely a moment later two dark objects leapt out of space, as it were. One was

singled out by the flagship, which headed straight for it. There was a loud, resounding, and sickening crash, the grinding of metal, the hissing of escaping steam and sheets of flames ; and the German torpedo-boat destroyer, as she proved to be, had been cut clean in two. The *Undaunted* passed between the two halves, now rapidly sinking, and heard the poor wretches shouting and moaning, but the heavy sea soon swallowed them up, and there was never a hope of a survivor, so swiftly had the terrible work of destruction taken place.

The second enemy ship crossed ahead and disappeared out of sight almost as suddenly as she had come into view, and it was whilst the *Undaunted* was steadying her helm and keeping a sharp look-out for other enemy units that the flagship's speed slackened (no doubt due to the collision) and, before the *Undaunted* could clear her, she struck her a glancing blow on her quarter, badly damaging her bows in consequence. As the result of this the *Undaunted* fell out of line to port, and the *Penelope*, coming up quickly from astern, just missed her in turn. Imagine the *Undaunted's* great surprise when as she passed, she flashed by shaded Morse lamp the following signal : "What has happened, and what were you firing at just now ?" Though barely three cables astern, she had witnessed nothing of the ghastly affair of a few seconds before.

The damage the *Undaunted* received to her bows from the collision with the flagship proved more serious than at first had been anticipated, and they were compelled to "heave to" while they reinforced the only remaining bulkhead, and in the meantime they lost touch with the squadron. Every available plank and spar on board was cut up and utilized to "shore up" the only "hope of salvation", but this did not allow them to steam sufficiently to make any appreciable headway, as any undue strain would have caused the remaining bulkhead to collapse.

The sea was far too rough to attempt steaming astern, and they were just barely able to keep the ship's head to the sea by turning a few revolutions of the engines. To make things worse, they were gradually drifting with the strong

westerly wind towards the German coast. This state of affairs continued all through the following day and night, and having been by then blown to within sixty miles of the German coast, they all felt rather pessimistic as to whether they would ever be pickcd up by our Fleet before the Germans caught sight of them in their plight.

It was not deemed prudent to use the wireless for fear of giving away their position to the enemy, but it was known from the wireless signals intercepted that a strong force of cruisers and battle cruisers from the Firth of Forth base were scouring the sea in search. When eventually dawn broke on the second day the wind and sea had dropped almost to a dead calm, and due east the faint form of land appeared with a vigilant Zeppelin hovering over it on reconnaissance duty. It was not long before the airship had made out the *Undaunted*, which had by then started steaming and making about four knots, and shaped a course hastily towards her to investigate.

From the *telefunken* wireless messages intercepted it was obvious that the Zeppelin was reporting the position of the *Undaunted* to headquarters, and the future looked far from pleasant. Unless assistance arrived they would soon be annihilated. Captain St. John therefore made a bold decision, and sent an urgent priority message giving the estimated position of the ship and brief details of the precarious situation they were in. This signal the Germans attempted to "jam", but without success, and, to their great relief, almost an hour afterwards the 5th Battle Squadron from Rosyth hove in sight and formed a screen round her. Crawling along at about five knots, they eventually reached Newcastle two days later without further incident and went into dry dock.

From Harwich it was ascertained that the *Cleopatra* had scarcely received so much as a scratch on her bows as the result of having rammed and cut the German destroyer G–194 in two. She also escaped serious damage when the *Undaunted* collided with her. It had been an exciting and harassing experience, and the "spot of leave" the crew obtaincd as the result of thc collision was much appreciated,

as it was the first that had been granted to them since the commencement of hostilities.

. . . . .

One night a concert party entertained the crews of the Harwich flotillas in the big recreation-shed on Parkeston Quay, and a lady and gentleman sang a duet which went :

"The moon has raised her lamp on high ;
I come to you, my heart's delight.
I come . . . I come . . . my heart's delight,
I come . . . I come . . . my heart's delight,"

and the lady replied in similar manner ; when from the back of the hall a big deep-sea voice bellowed, "We don't give a damn how soon you come or how soon you go, but do something quick, then we'll all get a bit of peace."

As if to add insult to injury, another entertainer recited a poem which ended :

"God gave the sea to England, and we must keep it free,"

and the same gruff voice was heard to mutter :

"Not 'arf . . . how abart giving us a bloody 'and ?"

It was usual for destroyers in war-time to undergo docking and refitting every four to six months, though at times this period had to be prolonged owing to other vessels having a prior claim on the resources of the dockyard authorities—those, for instance, which had been damaged in action or collision or through striking a mine, and who for other urgent reasons naturally necessitated their being taken in hand before the others.

The duration of a refit was often enough extended from the nominal ten days to a fortnight in order to fit and install some new device for perfecting the armament or fire control of the vessel, etc. During these refits the officers and crews were given leave of absence in watches, subject to immediate recall.

On one occasion a certain destroyer of the Ninth Flotilla happened to be in dry dock at Chatham (sharing the same with another destroyer which had recently been mined),

one watch being on leave and not due back for another two days. The ship was full of dockyard men, who, having pulled her to pieces and taken all sorts of gear away for repairs, were commencing to bring them back duly completed and putting them into place again. They were also painting out the officers' quarters and mess decks or living-spaces so that the ship was almost unhabitable. The funnels, ship's side, and a good deal of the upper works had been scraped of its old paintwork with the aid of working parties from the naval barracks, and were being covered with their primary coat of red-lead paint. The work, however, was being hindered and delayed, owing to the fact that it was snowing and had been for twenty-four hours.

Whilst this state of affairs existed the C.O. received the pleasant news that the German High Seas Fleet was on the alert and expecting any moment to put to sea. He was ordered to prepare instantly for sea and be ready to join up with his flotilla again within twenty-four hours. The order reached him at about 11 a.m., and the first thing to be done was to recall the officers and men on leave and then arrange with the dockyard officials to get a move on. The snow continued all that day and night and was some three or four inches deep the next morning, so that the work of hastily preparing the ship for sea was carried out under the worst conditions possible, especially as a good deal of time had to be spent in undocking and moving out into the basin.

The dockyard's first move was to satisfy themselves that all was ready to flood the dock, and, having done this, to tow the destroyer out to some convenient berth in the basin so that all the various parts and fittings could be rushed down from the repair-shops and hurriedly put in place. The painting of the living-spaces was left half finished, as were all the minor defects.

The dockyard worked magnificently, especially the engineering department, as, since the guns and torpedo tubes had been finished some days before, it was only the boiler- and engine-room repairs that held her up, and now prevented her going to sea.

All those on leave rejoined the ship during the early part of the night ; but no one got any sleep or rest, and the dockyard men, aided by the ship's engine-room staff, worked double time down below.

Shortly before 9 p.m. the ammunition lighters arrived alongside (despite the fact that no explosives were supposed to be allowed inside the dockyard or to be handled alongside), and by 11 p.m. that night the ship was complete with ammunition and torpedoes.

The boilers were finished and the fires were alight by 4 a.m. By nine o'clock the main and auxiliary engines were being tested, and having been found in order, the destroyer steamed through the locks into the River Medway, and by 11 a.m. was off Sheerness, swinging for adjustment of the compass, after which she completed with oil fuel.

Due to the state of the weather, it had been found impossible to cover up the red-lead patches on the hull with dark-grey paint, and she looked a comic sight in her piebald appearance of red and grey. However, the ship had got out of the dockyard in the specified time and was now ready for sea ; great credit is due to Chatham Dockyard authorities for the manner in which they handled the thousand and one details. The only defect found was that some of the workmen had mixed up the voice-pipes to the guns and torpedo tubes and cross-connected them—this led to a little profanity later on when the ship's company exercised "action stations" —but the defect was soon rectified.

Having completed with oil, they then requested permission from the Commander-in-Chief at the Nore to proceed, but were told that the need for haste had now disappeared and that they might remain at a buoy at Sheerness for twenty-four hours to finish off the refit and make themselves "look presentable".

The German Fleet's sortie had been a false alarm, so the next day was utilized in transforming their piebald plumage into a respectable dark grey, and having done so they sailed for Harwich, never wishing to see a dockyard again.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### *The Lowestoft Raid*

*April 1916.*

GIVING "TIT FOR TAT", the enemy decided to raid our coast in order to teach us a lesson for raiding theirs, so just to get the right idea of the atmosphere which preceded something of this sort, we will quote a few more entries from diaries, which are short and brief but to the point.

*Monday, March 27th.* We (H.M.S. *Meteor*) arrived at Grimsby and went alongside *Mansfield*, which was at the oiler. I find out a lot can happen at sea without other ships in the same flotilla knowing a thing about it. I heard about the scrap the *Mansfield* had with the German trawlers. They picked up sixteen survivors. The crew told us how the *Laverock* and *Medusa* collided while picking up survivors and how it became necessary to sink the *Medusa*. Sure was a sticky end for a good ship.

*Tuesday, 28th.* Still blowing like nobody's business. Equinoctial gales they call them. Had to put out second bridle. Just finished making the boat doubly secure when I thought we were all blown to Kingdom Come. Explosion in boiler-room, but fortunately, by nothing less than a miracle, none of the "black gang" were killed or injured. A darned lucky escape for those down below at the time.

*Thursday, 30th.* Left Grimsby for Harwich with the "L" class destroyers and went alongside the "wall" to have our boilers fixed up. While here we heard of the terrible disaster which befell the cutter belonging to the *Conquest*. We heard the *Conquest* lost forty hands all told and the *Melpomnie* two. Whatever happened, happened last Tuesday, and we can't find out any particulars. We wonder if any of our particular pals got scuppered.

*Monday, April 24th.* Nothing much has happened since I last wrote, but just as we slipped and went out to sea we heard the *Media* and *Melpomnie* had been in a dog-fight. The *Melpomnie* lost one man killed and three wounded. We did steaming trials, following our repairs, and when we returned to harbour we were ordered to be ready for sea at one hour's notice. Once again we feel it in our bones that something is going to happen. You can't grab hold of anything which is definite. The cook heard one of the officers say this ; the signalman heard someone else say that ; but if you believe all of what is rumoured, then we are in a pretty bad way right at the present time. Some say the Fleet is short of fuel and couldn't stay at sea more than forty-eight hours. Others claim the enemy are planning to land an army on the east coast, make a quick sweep down to London, and hold the south-east coast of England like they hold the Flemish coast across the Channel. It seems to be general belief that the Germans are willing to risk their fleet to accomplish this feat, and where in blazes the story comes from I don't know, but it is predicted that the Irish will break out in open rebellion at the same time the Germans attack the east coast.

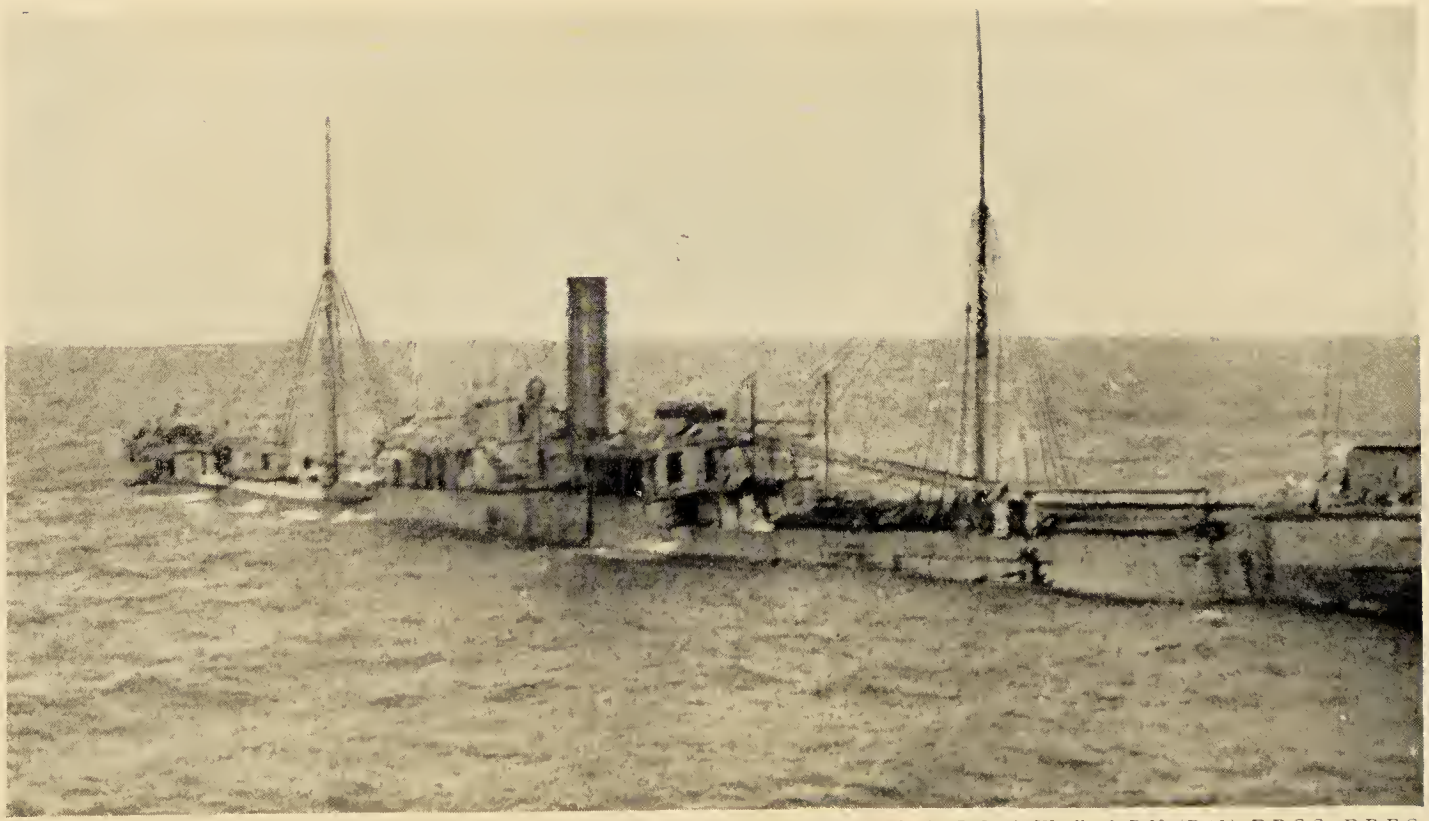
*Tuesday, April 25th.* We slipped and went to sea at midnight. Everyone knows there is something doing, but nobody seems to know just what it is. We are ordered to action stations at 2.30 a.m.

Now we will shift over to a very interesting account given me by Leading Signalman H. G. Dann, R.N.V.R., who was on the bridge of the *Miranda* during the whole of the Lowestoft raid.

"The ships of 'The Harwich Striking Force' had been on edge for several days previous to the actual raid. First we would get orders to raise steam . . . then they would be cancelled. We were finally ordered to the Felixstowe Trot and had steam ready for a moment's notice. We saw the *Murray* and three other destroyers leave for the Belgian coast. Then a funny thing happened. On Monday, April 24th, the Harwich Force sailed. We cruised all day along

[*Photos : Cmdr. C. L. A. Woollard, R.N. (Retd.), F.R.G.S., F.R.E.S.*

*Right.* THE STERN OF THE DESTROYER *Matchless*, WHICH WAS MINED. THE FOUR-INCH GUN ON LEFT WAS BLOWN INTO THE AIR, AND, TURNING A COMPLETE SOMERSAULT, FELL SOME TWENTY-FIVE FEET FURTHER FORWARD, BURYING ITS MUZZLE INTO THE STEEL DECK. IT BROUGHT UP WITHIN A FOOT OF THE SUB.-LIEUTENANT'S HEAD, WHO WAS ASLEEP IN HIS BUNK AT THE TIME



[*Photo : Cmdr. C. L. A. Woollard, R.N. (Retd.), F.R.G.S., F.R.E.S.*

MERCHANT SHIP SINKING IN NORTH SEA AFTER HAVING BEEN TORPEDOED

the Dutch and Belgian coast. We received a signal from *Murray* : 'Am engaging fourteen enemy destroyers require urgent assistance.' We didn't doubt it for one moment. Commander Dorling (known to the public under the *nom-de-plume* of 'Taffrail') had the *Murray*.

"Leading Signalman Keene and I passed on the signals to the *Conquest*, in which ship Commodore Tyrwhitt carried his flag. We used the visual signal searchlight and we wondered why Tyrwhitt did not steer south and assist the *Murray*. We were somewhere in the vicinity of the North Hinder Light-vessel at this time, and we cruised in the vicinity while *Murray* kept repeating signals asking for assistance. Keene and I flashed them all to *Conquest* in accordance with orders received from our Captain, Lieutenant-Commander P. B. Crohan ; but nothing we expected happened, and as evening wore on Commodore Tyrwhitt made a signal which ordered all ships to return to Harwich at full speed. I remember the signal Tyrwhitt made. It read : 'We have been ordered to return to base.'

"By good luck the *Murray* division lost no ships.

"As we neared Harwich, Signalman Harry Keene picked up a message : 'Despatch is necessary in completing with oil fuel.'

"When I got down below the news was around the mess deck, because I heard a dumb sort of kid say, 'What does "despatch is necessary in completing with oil fuel" mean ?' ; and an old mature A.B. said :

" 'Fill up with oil as fast as the Lord will let you.'

"We had no sooner arrived than we received another signal. Flagship to all ships. 'Captains repair aboard flagship at 9 p.m. bring chart No. —— with you.'

"The destroyer Captains went aboard and returned to their commands an hour later. The *Miranda* was alongside the starboard side of the oiler and the *Royal* (Commander Burges Watson) was on the port side of the same oiler.

"About midnight we received the signal : 'H.M.' This meant silence in the Fleet, and ruled out visual signalling done by flashlamps. 'H.M.' was the signal usually used when

an air raid threatened. Shortly afterwards we saw the searchlights over Ipswich playing on a Zep., and fifteen minutes later the whole Harwich Striking Force proceeded out of harbour.

"My skipper called to the *Royal* : 'Are you going now, Burgo ?'

"The skipper of the *Royal* replied, 'Yes.'

"Our skipper called back, 'O.K. I'll follow you out.'

"About an hour previous we had heard the *Melampus* had sailed accompanied by a brood of submarines. As we crept out of harbour in the darkness the *Conquest* led, followed by the *Penelope*, then came the *Nimrod* and the *Lightfoot* flotilla leaders. They were accompanied by about sixteen 'L' and 'M' class destroyers.

"When we reached the Beachend buoy we all wondered why we turned north instead of proceeding through the XI Sledway as we usually did when going on our regular sweeps of the southern portion of the North Sea.

"I had the middle watch, and in view of the events of the day before I naturally expected whatever stunt it was would be off the Belgian or Dutch coast.

"Signals were handed up to me from the wireless-room to be reported to my Captain. They were from the Vice-Admiral, Dover patrol. It was pitch dark, and I had to go into the chart-room, put my head over the chart-table, and pull a canvas cover over my head. All lights, except for reading signals, were prohibited. I read and memorized the signals as best I could and reported them to the bridge. We just plugged along until 4 a.m., but everyone on board knew we were in for it because someone had heard the Captain say to No. 1, 'We'll be in action before daylight.'

"I had only just got down below and put my head down when the alarm rang, 'Action stations'. We doubled up on deck again. I dashed aft to get the Dumaresque from the First Lieutenant's cabin. It was my job to work this instrument when in action and pass on the range to the sight-setters. To pass along the decks I had to crawl under the

torpedo tubes, and as I passed Harry Freeman called, 'Hi, Bert . . . where are we ?'

" 'Off our own coast somewhere near Lowestoft by now,' I called back.

" 'Oh, hell !' replied Harry. 'I just bet Cookie Hawkins we was off the Belgian coast. . . . Good-bye half a crown.'

"Overhead I noticed a Zeppelin ; it was just breaking daylight, and she looked for all the world like a great big cigar. She appeared almost stationary.

"Just before 'Action stations' was sounded Leading Signalman 'Pasha' Baker reported to the skipper : 'Our battle cruisers over there, sir,' and he pointed to them ; He spoke quite calmly, satisfied that the ships he saw were those under the command of Vice-Admiral Beatty. He nearly fell off the bridge when Crohan growled back at him :

" 'Like hell they are . . . they're ruddy Huns.'

"We went round the German battle cruisers to seaward, and it wasn't long before we knew we were up against the *Seydlitz*, *Lutzow*, *Derflinger*, *Von Der Tann*, and, I believe, the *Hindenburg* ; and these enemy battle cruisers were accompanied by a strong force of light cruisers and destroyers. Our force was hopelessly outgunned and outnumbered. It was quite obvious by this time that the enemy fleet was bombarding the towns of Yarmouth and Lowestoft, and it was our job to attack them and draw their fire. We could see the sheets of flame clearly as the enemy battle cruisers fired broadsides at the coastal towns. They could shoot half as far again with their big guns as we could with our 4-inch. It looked pretty bad.

"We turned and came back between the enemy and the coast. We seemed to be travelling very slowly at first—ten or fifteen knots—and as we drew within range the enemy shifted their fire from the coast to us, concentrating on the flagship *Conquest*.

"Surgeon Probationer Robinson strolled along and said, 'Good morning, gentlemen. Lovely day for shooting, isn't it ?' It was.

"Commodore Tyrwhitt now showed the stuff of which he

was made. Cool as a cucumber, he changed course and altered speed every few minutes and dodged the salvoes of shells which were so admirably directed by the Zeppelin. First we would receive the signal, 'Four blue,' and turn four points to port together . . . then it would be, 'Four points to starboard.' One moment we would be steaming as slowly as ten knots, and then we'd jump to fifteen and even twenty. The salvo of heavy enemy shells dropped around like huge raindrops, and sent columns of water shooting more than a hundred feet into the air. We only had to be hit by one of them and we would hand in the number of our mess. One of those big shells could blow any destroyer to glory.

"We could see Commodore Tyrwhitt on the bridge of his flagship taking a squint every now and again at the enemy through his telescope, and when I saw a flash and a sheet of flame shoot up from the flagship, I blurted out excitedly to our Captain, 'The *Conquest* is hit, sir.'

"We saw she had been hit near the main-mast. It toppled and fell by the board, carrying the White Ensign with it ; but a moment later we saw another ensign being run up on the fore-mast. The firing was really getting hot by this time. Shells were plunging all around us and we couldn't do much by way of return, so we put up a smoke screen and every destroyer was soon belching forth a thick cloud of black smoke. As soon as our movements were hidden from the enemy we received the signal, 'Q.Z.'— 'Proceed at your utmost speed.'

"Gosh, it felt good to be moving along at full speed. You cannot help but feel sort of helpless when you are just crawling along.

"Next signal I received from flagship was : 'Indicate casualties,' but although shells had fallen in a curtain all around us I don't think any other ship had been actually hit except the flagship.

"Our men were growing impatient. The range was still 12,000 yards and our guns could fire only 8,000, but we had the satisfaction of seeing the German ships turn round and beat it for home. All you could hear around the

decks and on the bridge was, 'How I wish Beatty was here !'

"We had done our job. We had drawn the fire of the enemy and turned them back. Unfortunately, an enemy submarine got a torpedo into the *Penelope*, but I understand they towed her safely back to port. The flagship had the most casualties; she lost forty-seven men killed and wounded. Some of the destroyers were hit, but none of them seriously damaged.

"The ordinary seaman who had asked the 'wet' question, 'What does "despatch is necessary in completing with oil fuel" mean ?' said to the same A.B. : 'I expect what has just happened was all planned ?' And the staid A.B. replied :

" 'No, you B.F. It was all just an accident !'

"But afterwards on the lower deck we argued and were puzzled to know just how Tyrwhitt knew when to leave the *Murray* and turn back to Harwich. How he knew just where to go and the exact time to arrive when we left Harwich at midnight. We often asked each other just what must have taken place when the Captains met aboard the flagship previous to sailing, and we wondered no longer why there had been that extraordinary feeling of uneasiness the week before.

"I can still remember how destroyer Captains liked to kid each other. During the Lowestoft scrap the *Manly* had been ordered to follow the flagship closely after she had been hit, in case it became necessary for Commodore Tyrwhitt to transfer his flag. The result was that she came in for a good deal more than her fair share of shelling, and any one of the big German shells would have blotted her out of existence, like swatting a fly, had they hit her. When she arrived back in Harwich my skipper sent for me and told me to make the following signal : '*Miranda* to *Manly*. How do you like being a light cruiser ?' And the reply read, 'Go to blazes!' This was done just for fun.

"The *Meteor* was detailed to escort the *Conquest* and *Penelope* to Chatham dockyard for repairs, and her crew had bright visions of wangling some leave ; but instead of leave

they were rushed right off to sea again with some ships of the Dover patrol. They left to carry out a retaliatory raid against the Belgian coast. They were accompanied by some monitors armed with a single big long-range gun, but the weather turned hazy and the ships were recalled.

"We settled down to usual routine again. One day we were called on the quarter-deck and the Captain read a message received from the Mayors of Lowestoft and Yarmouth telling us how much they appreciated what we had done. They said what a fine sight it had been for the inhabitants to see our ships steam in between them and the enemy ships and draw their fire. They said they were proud of the Navy, and we appreciated what they said.

"I read in the papers that the Germans wrecked one convalescent home, hit a swimming-bath, the pier, and forty dwelling-houses were extensively damaged ; but only two men, one woman, and an eight-months-old baby were killed. There were about a dozen wounded. Great Yarmouth escaped serious damage."

So ends the story of Leading Signalman H. G. Dann, R.N.V.R., then aboard H.M.S. *Miranda*, now a telegraphist with the Canadian National Railways in Canada.

Our shipmates on the lower deck often wondered and were puzzled to know what was happening to cause divisions and flotillas of light cruisers to dash madly here and there. They couldn't understand why they would receive orders to raise steam to one-hour notice, only to have the order countermanded almost immediately afterwards ; but their officers knew that the most gigantic game of chess possible to imagine was being played between the heads of the two navies.

Let us picture for a moment the German High Command sitting round a conference-table just prior to the Lowestoft raid. They were not planning "baby-killing", as we so frequently accused them of doing during the war ; they were planning something far more important, and that was to reduce the strength of the British Navy, so that it would only be equal at best—and inferior, if possible—to the

German Navy when the German High Seas Fleet decided to come out and fight.

The Lowestoft raid was a feint . . . it was similar to a boxer's quick, short jab which is led to the opponent's solar plexus in order to make him drop his guard so that he can bring a right upper-cut from his toes to the point of his opponent's chin.

From what I have heard since, it is a mighty good thing for England that we had an Intelligence Service as smart as they were, and men like Jellicoe, Beatty, Tyrwhitt, and the gallant Hood, who knew how to put the information supplied to them to the best advantage.

The German plan was probably along these lines. They would raid and bombard the English coast. This would bring out the British Navy in full force, as it did when they raided Scarborough in 1914 and when they made the attempted raid which brought about the Dogger Bank action. They decided that the two previous raids had been made too far north on the English coast ; this time they would strike at Yarmouth and Lowestoft, because then the British Navy would have farther to come in order to chase them and farther to go when they gave up the chase and had to return.

Being satisfied that the British Navy would come out and chase them, they arranged for their mine-laying submarines to sneak in at the last possible moment and mine the approaches to Harwich, in the hope that Tyrwhitt's force of light cruisers and destroyers would run foul of them. They also arranged for mine-fields to be laid off the Firth of Forth where Beatty's battle cruisers were based, and off Cromarty and Scapa Flow where the Grand Fleet had their headquarters. In addition to the mine-fields they planned a first-class reception committee in the form of the pick of their submarine commanders, who were ordered to patrol in positions the British Fleet were likely to pass through at daylight.

The big idea behind the whole plan was not to kill a few babies but to rip the heart right out of the British Empire

with one quick lightning-like stroke. They had planned the Irish rebellion to coincide with this raid, and I have heard on good authority since the war that the German High Command had promised those who led the rebellion that Germany would land an army on the south-east coast of England and occupy London.

The only way in which such a plan could succeed was to dispose of the British Navy. Mine-laying and submarine traps were not planned to get the British naval forces as they put to sea ; they were planned to get them as they returned to port, because it could be reasonably supposed that when the British Navy returned after chasing the German raiders home, and suffered serious losses from mine and torpedo just as they arrived back at their own bases, they would have to remain in harbour until they had refuelled and swept up the mine-fields.

It was the German plan to draw the whole of the British Navy to sea and keep them there for as long a time as possible, and draw the Grand Fleet and battle cruiser squadrons away from their bases as far as possible.

It was planned the raid would take place early Wednesday morning. The British Navy would reach the vicinity of Jutland that night and be kept engaged during the night and played around with all next day. It would have been Friday night when they returned to their own harbour, and it was intended that a good number of them should receive the same treatment as the *Arethusa* received when she returned to harbour after driving off a previous raid. That these plans were actually put into operation is proved by the fact that when "The Harwich Striking Force" attacked the raiders they turned and ran, whereas if they had wished they could have blown Tyrwhitt's ships to Kingdom Come without ever letting them get close enough to use their lower-calibre guns. After the enemy turned away and raced for home, every man, woman, and child in England asked, "Where is the British Navy?" . . . "What is the Navy doing?" The British Navy defeated the most ambitious plans ever conceived by an enemy of the Empire by staying in harbour

and upsetting completely the cleverly organized German scheme. And the proof of the rest of the plan lies in the fact that the *Penelope* was torpedoed by an enemy submarine after she started for home. . . . Other British ships, one a submarine, blew up on mines as they tried to enter their bases after the show was over, and every available minesweeper was kept constantly at work keeping a passage open from the various naval bases in order that the might of the British Navy could sweep down and break up the planned invasion should the German High Command have been foolish enough to try to carry out the last part of their plans when the first part of the programme had gone so completely "haywire".

That the enemy didn't try to carry out the second part of their plans is history. After waiting and wondering, their misguided Irish allies revolted according to plan ; but their leaders knew that their cause was hopeless when their well-thought-out plans had been checkmated by the action of the British Navy refusing to be drawn into their carefully prepared trap.

This line of reasoning will also explain why the *Murray* was left to fight fourteen German destroyers whilst the rest of Commodore Tyrwhitt's ships raced back to Harwich. If they had stayed to help the *Murray* they would never have got back in time to harass the German raiding squadrons when they arrived off Lowestoft. If there had been no threatened invasion, "The Harwich Striking Force", with their superior speed, could easily have kept contact with the enemy during their race for home, and kept Admiral Jellicoe informed of their position and movements ; but it was wiser and safer for them to return to Harwich and refuel. By doing so they were right on the spot waiting and ready to drive off the real thrust should it happen. And still the world asked, "What is the Navy doing ?"

It is strange how people's sins will find them out . . . perhaps it is stranger still how their good deeds are so often lost to posterity ; but amongst my files I came across a scribbled note. It reads :

*Dear Mr. Carr,*

*I am sure you remember "Taffrail" (Lieutenant-Commander Dorling), who had the "Murray". This newspaper cutting was clipped by me from the "Daily Mail", July 1916. As a man who served with the Harwich Striking Force, I think it just about hits the nail on the head. Wishing you luck with your new book.*

*H. G. D.*

Could it be that our dear friend "Taffrail" was thinking of the day he was left to fight (fourteen enemy ships) and find his weary way back home again alone when he wrote this perfectly priceless description of what life was like in a Harwich destroyer? It was my intention to write a chapter along similar lines, but seeing that this job has been done in such a masterly fashion by "Taffrail", it would be presumption on my part to do so, and with his permission and that of the *Daily Mail* I will produce this delightful article which is so true to life.

## THE MISSING DESTROYER

"The glass had gone down with a thump that afternoon, and all through the night the destroyer had been steaming home against a rapidly rising gale.

"Of how she came to be alone and parted from her flotilla the less said the better. It was due to a variety of circumstances, among them being a blinding rain-squall after dark the evening before, in which the officer of the watch was unable to see more than twenty yards, and some temporary trouble with an air-pump which necessitated stopping to put it right.

"The sea, which is usual with the wind from the south-west, had risen fast, and by midnight it was heavy and steep, while the little ship, punching against it, had pitched, rolled, thumped, and thudded as only a destroyer can. The motion was dizzy and maddening—a combined pitch and heavy roll which was the very acme of discomfort. Sometimes the

bows fell into the heart of an advancing white-topped hillock of grey water with a sickening downward plunge, and the breaking sea came surging and crashing over the forecastle to dash itself against the chart-house and bridge with a shock which made the whole ship quiver and tremble. Then, with a breathless upward heave, the forepart lifted on the back of some gigantic comber until the bow and forefoot were well out of water.

"Occasionally there came a few moments of comparative peace and quietness ; but at all times sheets of spray, too solid to be called 'spray' at all, flew high over the bridge and funnel tops, and always the little ship seemed to be rolling heavily until broken water washed waist-deep over her upper deck, while it was barely possible to maintain a footing on the oscillating bridge without holding on. The speed had had to be reduced from twenty knots to fifteen, from fifteen to ten, and finally to eight, to prevent the ship from being strained.

"On the bridge were the officer of the watch and the usual signalman, quartermaster at the wheel, and men on the lookout. They wore oilskins, sea-boots, and sou'-westers, and were wrapped up to the eyes in thick woollen mufflers ; but nevertheless the sea had found its way through the chinks of their armour and they were all drenched through to the skin and bitterly cold. Moreover, the signalman, having lately been drafted from a harbour vessel, was fearfully and wonderfully seasick, and was too far gone to conceal the fact.

. . . . .

"The commanding officer lay at full length on the cushioned settee in the chart-house underneath the bridge. He, having been up for the greater part of the last forty-eight hours, was endeavouring to get a little sleep. But slumber, with the smashing and crashing of the seas, the thudding and jarring of the ship and the motion, was practically out of the question. He had to brace his muscles and wedge himself as best he could to remain on the settee at all, for at one moment a heavy lurch would precipitate him,

cushion and all, out through the open door on the lee side, while the next a downward plunge of the bows would all but land him horizontally on the deck.

"The chart-house itself dripped with moisture, and on the deck three or more inches of dirty water, two rapidly disintegrating charts—luckily they were old ones—a broken cup and saucer, a tin of cocoa, the pulpy remains of a couple of ship's biscuits, one bottle of red ink, one ditto Stickphast, a pair of parallel rulers, somebody else's sou'-wester, and an assortment of note-books, bound *Sailing Directions*, and other debris swished happily from side to side every time the ship rolled. Six times had the C.O. risen from his couch, rescued the books, and replaced them in their shelves over the settee, wedging them firmly in place. But six times had the sea laughed at him, and after giving him time to fall into an uneasy but comforting doze had precipitated the sharp-edged volumes with unerring accuracy on his long-suffering head.

"The only person who really did not mind the motion at all was the wireless operator in his little cubby-hole abaft the chart-house. He, with a pair of telephone receivers clipped on over his ears ready to catch stray snatches of conversation from invisible ships and distant shore station, sat enthroned in a chair bolted to the deck. His den was hermetically sealed to keep out the water. The smell and the heat were indescribable ; but he was reading a week-old periodical with every symptom of enjoyment and calmly smoked a foul and very wheezy pipe filled with the strongest and most evil-smelling "Prick" tobacco. But "Buzzer", as he was known to his friends, had the constitution of an ox and an interior like the exterior of an armadillo. He could stand anything.

. . . . .

"An oil-skinned apparition dripping with wet appeared at the chart-house door. 'The orficer of the watch says it's daylight, sir,' it reported. 'There's nothin' in sight, but 'e thinks as 'ow the sea's goin' down a bit.'

"The skipper, who had actually been asleep for forty consecutive minutes, sat up with a grunt, rubbed his eyes, and yawned. Then in the dull grey light of the dawn he surveyed the unsavoury mixture on the floor with his nose wrinkled and an expression of intense disgust on his face. But the sight of the broken cup reminded him of something, and reaching his hand underneath the cushion he extracted a vacuum flask, applied it to his lips, and swallowed what remained of the cocoa inside it. He was hungry, poor wight, for his dinner the night before had consisted of two corn-beef sandwiches and a biscuit. Next, with a little sigh of satisfaction, he produced a pipe, tobacco, and matches from an inner pocket and lit up, examined the chart with the ship's track marked upon it, and glanced at the aneroid on the bulkhead and noticed it was rising slowly.

"Two minutes later, with his pipe-bowl carefully inverted, he clambered up the iron ladder to the bridge.

" 'Hail, smiling morn!' he remarked sarcastically, ducking his head as a sheet of spray came driving over the forecastle and across the bridge. 'Well, Sub., how goes it?'

" 'Pretty rotten, sir,' answered the Sub-Lieutenant, whose watch it was. 'The wind shows no signs of going down, but I think the sea's a little less than it was. We're not bumping quite so badly as we were.'

. . . . .

"The motion certainly was less violent, and after looking for a moment at the angry sea and the grey, cloud-wrapped sky, streaked with its wisps of flying white scud, the skipper nodded slowly. 'You're right,' he said. 'It has gone down a bit. We're beginning to feel the lee of the land. Work her up gradually to twelve knots and see how she takes it.'

"The Sub. did so, and although the increase in speed brought heavier spray and more of it, the movement of the ship no longer synchronized with the period of the waves, and she became steadier.

"Before long the sea had gone down even more, and the speed was increased to twenty knots. Then, on the grey

horizon ahead, appeared the smoke of many steamers, and a quarter of an hour later the destroyer was threading her way through a sea-lane so densely populated with shipping that it reminded one of dodging the traffic in Piccadilly.

"The next thing which hove in sight was a red-painted lightship, and half an hour later the destroyer, her funnels white with dried salt, was steaming into the harbour where the remainder of the flotilla were lying. They, having escaped the really bad weather, had arrived the evening before, and one of them made a facetious signal to this effect as the destroyer secured to the tank steamer to replenish her supply of oil-fuel.

"The lost sheep had returned to its fold."

## CHAPTER TWENTY

### *The Battle of Jutland*

*May 1916.*

"MAY DAY broke nice and clear, and it wasn't breakfast-time before several of the Harwich light cruisers were ordered to sea. The crews obeyed smartly, while all the time they grumbled about there being "no peace for the wicked or rest for the weary".

The Harwich Force picked up the battle cruisers, two county-class cruisers, H.M.S. *Antrim*, *Devonshire*, and the *Diamond*, also the battleships *Britannia*, *Hindustan*, *Africa*, *Dominion*, *Commonwealth*, and *Zealandia*, and escorted them as far as the Sunk L.-v. Still wondering what it was all about, they left them there and were ordered back to Harwich.

*Wednesday*, *May 3rd.* The *Meteor* and division left for Dover at noon, and passed *Matchless* and *Liberty* escorting battle cruiser *Australia*. They were ordered to proceed to Dunkerque. They were attached to H.M.S. *Attentive*, the *Swift*, and other destroyers, monitors, and French vessels which were operating off the Belgian coast. The next few days were occupied escorting mine-layers and mine-sweepers on their various duties, and nothing exciting happened until Monday, May 8th. About 3 a.m. they had laid a nest of mines off Zeebrugge, and were on patrol about 10 a.m., when they sighted two enemy destroyers. Unfortunately, they were inshore, and turned and ran. The Harwich Flotilla opened fire at long range and chased them right in under cover of their shore guns. Our ships didn't retire until after the *Minus* was hit. Fortunately, there were no casualties. The Commodore had been out in the *Myngs*, and the mine-layers *Briatz* and *Paris* laid a nice nest of eggs near the Terschelling Light-vessel.

*Saturday*, *May 13th.* This is a red-letter day. A bunch

of our destroyers located a German submarine and caught her right in the act of laying mines in one of the narrow channels. They surrounded her and drove her ashore. At low tide she looked like a stranded whale, and had to surrender. The men all had their tails up as they escorted the U–5 into harbour. They all felt so proud I doubt if they'd call the King their uncle.

*May 24th. Meteor, Mastiff, Matchless,* and *Miranda* off once again for Dunkerque. Routine duties ; and then on the 26th they were detailed for special duty with drifters.

*Saturday, 27th.* Left harbour at 3 a.m. and picked up signal from seaplane which had sighted enemy in two groups ten miles N.W. of Zeebrugge. Chased two enemy destroyers and went to enemy stations. Long-range firing. Enemy submarine sighted. *Matchless* put over her explosive sweeps and hooked her. A great deal of oil and wreckage came to the surface after the explosion. Enemy 'planes attacked and dropped bombs. No damage done. We tried to hit them with our pom-pom, but the gun jammed and we had to quit after firing a few rounds. At that the seaplanes didn't do too badly. They dropped one bomb close to the bows of the *Amazon* and another one dropped between the *Mastiff* and ourselves (*Meteor*).

On Monday, May 29th, *Meteor* slipped cable and, accompanied by other destroyers, proceeded out to sea. Shortly after noon they were subjected to a determined attack by enemy seaplanes, which narrowly missed picking off the *Nubian.* They were driven off, as we thought, by our gun-fire ; but they returned at 5 p.m. and picked the *Meteor* as their target. They dropped five more bombs, three of which missed only by a few feet. This attack was one of the best and most determined I saw carried out by enemy 'planes. The *Meteor* had to zigzag and dodge about to avoid the bombs, and on one occasion had to go full speed astern. After the attack was over our condensers began to leak badly and we had to return to Dunkerque for repairs. We were left behind in Dunkerque when all the other Harwich boats were recalled to their own base.

If only it were possible to explain the extraordinary feeling which everyone experienced just before an action! The commanding officers might keep their mouths closed as tight as clams. Every precaution might be taken to prevent leakage of information (and I honestly believe secrets were well kept), but there was nevertheless an atmosphere developed before major operations which was charged like a mine timed to go off at an early moment. As the destroyers raced back to their base this particular day every man and boy had the feeling that another few hours would make naval history. And they were right.

Hardly had they finished their frantic dash back to port, oiled, taken water aboard, and provisioned, than they were ordered to sea. At least, those who were ready went to sea, and the rest were ordered to follow. That is why only eight destroyers, one division of the Ninth Flotilla, and one of the Tenth, took an actual part in the Battle of Jutland.

Those of the Ninth Flotilla were *Lydiard*, *Liberty*, *Landrail*, and *Laurel*.

Those of the Tenth Flotilla were *Moorsom*, *Morris*, *Termagant*, and *Turbulent*.

The eight Harwich destroyers were temporarily attached to the Thirteenth Flotilla, and when they caught up with the battle cruisers under command of Vice-Admiral Sir David Beatty they were ordered to screen the 2nd Battle Cruiser Squadron consisting of the *New Zealand* and the *Indefatigable*.

By 2.30 p.m. on May 31st, everyone aboard knew the German High Seas Fleet was at sea, and Beatty took his ships right down into the mine-fields in the Bight of Heligoland looking for them. It was his job to find and hold them until the Grand Fleet came along to finish them off. This was the whole policy of the British Navy at that time—to bring about a decisive naval battle; and everyone concerned knew that sacrifices would have to be made. The men who served in the battle cruiser squadrons were told frankly what task lay ahead of them if ever the German Fleet put to sea and stayed out long enough. I believe Admiral Beatty offered any married man his transfer to another

branch of the service if he did not wish to take the risk involved.

As far as the Battle of Jutland is concerned, we will see it from the bridges of the *Laurel* and the *Morris*.

It is all an accident that the two Fleets actually became engaged in the first place, because at 2 p.m. in the afternoon the *Lion* (flagship) gave up the search as a bad job and made the signal ordering all the other ships to turn to the N.W. This manœuvre was duly carried out, with the exception of the light cruiser *Galatea*, which was the flagship of the 1st Light Cruiser Squadron consisting of four vessels. The *Galatea* did not receive the signal until fully fifteen minutes later, and just as she received it she sighted a suspicious-looking destroyer which was apparently stopped and examining a merchant ship. She and her sister ships increased to full speed and went off to investigate. The strange destroyer turned out to be German, and the *Galatea* opened fire. A report was made to Admiral Beatty, who immediately turned sixteen points and raced back at full speed towards the engagement.

While the light cruisers were blazing away at the German ship, five enemy battle cruisers came up over the horizon and took a hand in the game at extreme range. At 3.48 p.m. a number of light cruisers and destroyers were sighted, and these turned out to be German also. Admiral Beatty arrived on the scene and went into action at a range of 18,500 yards. As he opened fire he altered course to the southward, and the enemy ships did likewise. A fierce and intensive gunnery duel now took place between the two battle cruiser squadrons, which were about evenly matched. Our ships were, in order, *Lion* (flagship of Sir David Beatty) leading, next came the *Princess Royal* (next senior ship carrying the flag of Rear-Admiral Brock), then came the *Queen Mary*, *Tiger*, *New Zealand* (flagship of Rear-Admiral Pakenham), the *Invincible* (Rear-Admiral Hood), and, lastly, the *Indefatigable*. The ships were stationed roughly 500 yards apart, and their speed was about twenty-five knots. The destroyers' guns were of course out of range, but the crews

were able to observe the action when they weren't looking at the columns of water which rose into the air all around them as shells fired over or short by the enemy battle cruisers plunged into the sea.

Our men were cheered to see so many hits registered on the enemy ships, and it looked as though the Dogger Bank action was going to repeat itself then ; but, with a suddenness that was appalling, at exactly 4.4 p.m. two salvoes hit the *Indefatigable*, which was the last ship of the line. She seemed to stop dead in her tracks . . . she shook and shuddered . . . there was a terrific flash of flame . . . an enormous cloud of reddish-brown-and-black smoke rose from her and completely hid her from view. . . . Then came a terrific "puff !" and she blew up, sending debris and wreckage far and wide. The steam-launch or picket-boat, which weighed several tons, went sailing into the air as if on wings, and seemed to reach a height of several hundred feet. Undoubtedly the enemy shells had found her magazines ; nothing else could explain such complete disintegration, which robbed 57 officers and 960 men of their lives. It is only fair to say that the enemy battle cruisers seemed to absorb far more punishment with less drastic results.

When the smoke cleared away the *Indefatigable* had disappeared completely. For a while the crews of our destroyers saw our shells making numerous hits on the enemy ships, while our ships escaped almost without damage. This situation continued for fully twenty minutes, and it looked as if Beatty had the measure of the enemy. Then again, most unexpectedly, the tragedy which overcame the *Indefatigable* repeated itself. At 4.26 p.m. three shells seemed to hit the *Queen Mary*, and a moment later two more made a perfect hit. Nothing very terrible seemed to take place for a moment. Then a dull red glow appeared about midships. Next came a simple-looking "puff !" but whatever happened inside her hull was sufficiently powerful to blow that wonderful ship, which was the pride of our battle cruiser squadrons, to smithereens. A dense cloud of smoke which reached upward to the very heavens was all that

showed when a man who took a picture of the disaster from the deck of one of the Harwich destroyers developed his films, and with the *Queen Mary* went 58 officers and 1209 men, and amongst the officers two of my personal friends.

The *Laurel*, which at that time was on the disengaged side, closed the spot where the battle cruiser had disappeared —only to find a huge patch of oil thickly strewn with wreckage, to which some survivors clung desperately. The *Laurel* picked up fourteen of the crew, amongst these being three young midshipmen. One of them died later in hospital.

Before the *Laurel* had hoisted her whaler back on board the 5th Battle Squadron came tearing along and, being within range, opened fire on the enemy. The enemy ships returned the compliment, with the result that the shells fell thick and fast around the little destroyer. Some exploded so close that her deck was littered with splinters, but in some miraculous manner none of her crew was killed or wounded.

About 4.15 p.m., just before the *Queen Mary* met her sad fate, Vice-Admiral Beatty ordered the destroyers of the Thirteenth and Tenth Flotillas to make a torpedo attack on the enemy battle cruisers, with the result that the *Nestor*, *Nomad*, *Nicator*, *Narborough*, *Pelican*, *Petard*, *Obdurate*, and *Nerissa* of the Thirteenth, and the *Moorsom*, *Morris*, *Termagant*, and the *Turbulent* of the Tenth Harwich Flotilla moved out into the "no man's land" between the two fleets. Shaking and trembling, owing to the vibrations of their engines, they dashed into a perfect curtain of shell-fire at a speed of thirty-five knots. They were dodging about like snipe. Their objective was a position about four or five miles on the enemy's bow, and they had to cover just about the same distance to get there. When the enemy couldn't break up the attack by shell-fire they ordered their own light cruisers and destroyers, which were sheltered on the disengaged side, to pass through their lines and attack our destroyers. The two forces met in the middle of "no man's land", and they fought what is undoubtedly the hottest engagement that

ever took place at sea. The range decreased from 6000 to less than 3000 yards.

While the fight raged between the two destroyer forces the enemy battle cruisers took advantage of the situation to alter course to the south-west from the westerly direction they had previously been steering. Whilst our destroyers were having a ding-dong battle with the enemy small craft, the High Seas Fleet put in its unwelcome appearance. Our ships were now between the devil and the blue sea. The *Nestor* and *Nomad* had been badly hit already. They figured they could not escape destruction ; so instead of turning away and running from the new danger, they altered course and attacked the whole of the German High Seas Fleet. Their action was so courageous that the *Nicator* and *Moorsom* turned and chased after them, and, what is more important, these four gallant little fighting ships drove on until they reached their objective, and then they turned and fired their torpedoes at the enemy battle fleet. The German battle fleet had to turn its attention on these four midget ships, and they blotted the *Nestor* and *Nomad* out of existence ; but, wonderful to relate, the other two destroyers, zig-zagging like driven snipe, made their escape while the weight of the enemy shells churned the water into a boil all around them.

Those who witnessed this extraordinary performance saw the two destroyers disappear completely from time to time in a smother of spray and falling waterspouts. They would conclude that was their finish, but like terriers the two destroyers would bob up again, shaking the water from their decks. The *Moorsom* was hit in the cabin-flat by a 6-inch German shell, but she staggered bravely on and finally reached the protection of our own Fleet and joined up again with their flotilla leader. The enemy lost two ships during this attack and we lost two—honours even.

The action was continued until 9 p.m., but the Harwich destroyers were not actually engaged until after midnight. Our Fleet wished to keep in contact with the enemy ships after darkness had fallen, and the destroyers and light

cruisers were detailed for this rather unpleasant job. The 2nd Light Cruiser Squadron and the Fourth and Twelfth Destroyer Flotillas became involved with the enemy battle fleet several times during the night ; but it was not until shortly after midnight that suddenly, and without warning, the four Harwich destroyers found themselves lit up by the searchlights of the enemy battle fleet. It was a case of muck or nettles. They attacked and fired their remaining torpedoes, and they hit and sank one of the enemy ships. This fact caused the battleships to switch off their searchlights. The destroyers, having finished their job, turned and steered towards our own forces ; but the enemy switched on the searchlights again. Silvery fingers stabbed the darkness and felt around for a victim. That victim was the *Turbulent*. She was the last ship in our line, and it seemed as if every enemy ship fired at her. There was a blast of noise, deafening like thunder . . . flame split the night asunder . . . there seemed to be a ripple of fire dance the whole length of the *Turbulent* as the enemy shells found their mark, and she was literally blown into small fragments. Irrespective of the cost, however, Tyrwhitt's ships had lived up to their reputation. They had backed down to nobody. Some went to the bottom fighting . . . no ship from Harwich ever struck its flag.

The *Invincible* suffered the same fate as the *Queen Mary* and the *Indefatigable*. The irony of the whole thing is that, according to one of the nine survivors, just before she was hit Rear-Admiral Hood was commending the Gunnery Commander on the *Invincible's* wonderful shooting. Said this survivor, "Our opponent was afire fore and aft, but she didn't blow up. The next moment I thought the end of the world had come and I found myself swimming in the water."

## CONCLUSION TO PART TWO

With the battle of Jutland ended a very definite phase of the war at sea. This was the last time the enemy High Seas Fleet actually came to sea with the definite intention of accepting battle to settle the question of naval supremacy. From this time onwards there was still plenty of naval activity, but it was limited to mine-laying and unrestricted submarine warfare on the part of the enemy, backed up by determined air raids on our chief centres of population, interspersed with lightning-like raids by the enemy destroyers on Channel ports.

The mine-fields were laid for the purpose of inflicting losses on our Fleet in the hope that the day would come when it would be reduced in strength, and might be more equal in number of ships and weight of armament to the enemy's High Seas Fleet. The unrestricted submarine campaign was developed in the hope that the Allies might be starved into submission and the morale of our mercantile marine shattered. The air raids were calculated to horrify our civilian population to such an extent that public opinion would ultimately demand "peace at any price". History tells how these plans and ambitions failed miserably to attain their ends.

Our Grand Fleet and our Harwich Striking Force suffered many tragic losses, but as time went on the enemy fleet showed less inclination to fight a decisive action than ever. It was the morale of the enemy submarine crews which broke first and caused their unrestricted campaign of submarine warfare to fail just when it appeared they were about to succeed. Instead of the civilian population cracking under the nerve strain of continuous air raids the effect was exactly the opposite. The enemy only built up a grim determination amongst the population to "grin and bear it", and gradually we developed anti-submarine methods and anti-aircraft forces which caused the enemy submarine

crews to mutiny and their air force to become less and less anxious to meet our defence pilots.

The third volume of *By Guess and By God* tells of this last period of the war at sea, combining as it does the thrilling story of the submarine service, the Royal Naval Air Force, and the continued efforts of the hard-lying ships of "The Harwich Striking Force" under the title of *Good Hunting*. It is a story crammed full of thrilling adventures of young men who went all out and gave everything they had to save England and the British Empire. It is a story of regular Navy men, young Canadian fledglings, and men from all classes and walks of life who took an active if strange part in this cruel and nerve-racking last two years of the war.

Before concluding I wish to acknowledge that without the co-operation I received from so many ranks and ratings a work of this kind would have been an impossibility. I wish also to remind my readers that although I asked for permission to check the material in this book with the official records, this permission was refused, and perhaps the authorities had good reason for refusing. I have therefore had to rely entirely on evidence I was able to collect from individuals who served in ships attached to the famous Harwich Striking Force. I realize more than anyone that there may be inaccuracies in detail. I may have written "The ships turned to port" when in actual fact they turned to starboard. What I have tried to do is tell what happened to them and what they accomplished, irrespective of whether or not they turned to port or starboard.

I have seen the incidents described in these pages through many eyes, and I have tried to build up a composite story as true to fact as possible.

I wish to acknowledge the letters I have received, the interviews I have had, and the documents and pictures which have been supplied to me by the following officers and men.

First and foremost, Commander Claude L. A. Woollard, F.R.G.S., who served aboard H.M.S. *Undaunted*. He is the

author of *With the Harwich Naval Forces, 1914–1918*, which he published for private circulation. I refer to Commander Woollard frequently in the pages of *Brass Hats and Bell-Bottomed Trousers*, and I wish to give him full credit for the authorship of most of the related incidents in which this very gallant fighting ship figured so prominently. Commander Woollard was the founder of the Harwich Naval Force Association, of which Association Admiral of the Fleet Sir Reginald Tyrwhitt, Bart., G.C.B., D.S.O., D.C.L., is President, and Admiral Sir Barry E. Domvile, K.B.E., C.B., C.M.G., Vice-Admiral W. D. Paton, C.B., D.S.O., M.V.O., Captain C. W. Swithinbank, D.S.O., R.N. (Retd.), and Lord Kennet of Dene are Vice-Presidents. Commander Woollard was also the founder and first Chairman of the Royal Naval Old Comrades Association.

I also wish to give full acknowledgment to Mr. Harold E. Hewett, now of Port Colborne, Ontario, Canada, who supplied me with his diary of the war. Mr. Hewett served aboard H.M.S. *Meteor* from 1914 to 1918.

Stoker Petty Officer Leach, who served aboard H.M.S. *Hind*, supplied me with much of the material concerning the exciting adventures experienced by the crew of this destroyer.

The brother of Chief Yeoman of Signals George W. Smith, who served aboard H.M.S. *Forrester*, supplied me with letters and accounts written or sent to him during the war.

Others who kindly responded were Chief E.R.A. S. M. Wood, who served aboard H.M.S. *Skate*, and Petty Officer Carleton E. Horne, who served in H.M. Submarines C–18, D–1, D–4, E–2, E–25, E–48, H–1, H–4, L–24, M–1, S–1, and W–2. Also Petty Officer F. Clark, who served aboard H.M.S. *Maidstone*, H.M.S. *Pandora*, and H.M.S. *Zealandia*, who wrote, "I remember only too well having had to make keys to fit the doors of cabins which had been occupied by submarine officers who failed to return from patrol." P.O. Clark will perhaps be remembered by many as the man who used to play the piano in the old railway sheds at the concerts held there and referred to in this book.

Then there was Leading Seaman H. Russell, who, after

serving in ships of "The Harwich Striking Force", was transferred and helped sink the German raider *Grief* on February 29th, 1916.

Leading Signalman H. G. Dann, of H.M.S. *Miranda* ; Able Seaman J. Irvine, of H.M.M.L. "308" ; Leading Torpedoman Allan McKenzie, who served in submarines C–24 and E–23 ; Petty Officer S. Booth, of H.M.S. *Sylph* ; Mr. Walter L. Hales, who spent many years in the British submarine service, starting in the old A-boats ; Chief E.R.A. C. J. Crawford, who served aboard submarine C–25.

I also wish to acknowledge that Lieutenant-Commander Dorling, who commanded H.M.S. *Murray*, is none other than "Taffrail", and is the author of the very fine descriptive article telling how the destroyer which was lost came back to the fold.

To the late Lieutenant-Commander J. R. G. Moncrieffe and Lieutenant C. V. Groves, R.N.R., we are indebted for the thrilling story of the sinking of H.M. Submarine E–17.

Lastly, but by no means least, I wish to acknowledge the wonderful assistance given to me by Major Douglas Hallam, D.S.C. with two bars, who commanded the Felixstowe War Flight. This officer gave me access to the records and documents he had preserved, and is the author of *The Spider's Web*.

To the officers and men of "The Harwich Striking Force", and to the widows and children of those who paid the supreme sacrifice while so nobly performing their duties, I respectfully dedicate this book. Be they those who wore "brass hats" or those who wore "bell-bottomed trousers", they were all equal inasmuch that each and every one "did his bit" as best he knew how to uphold the glory and traditions of the British Navy.

THE END

# APPENDIX A

## LIGHT CRUISERS ATTACHED TO HARWICH FORCE

### *AMETHYST* (Flagship of Commodore T.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Commodore (2nd class) | Reginald Y. Tyrwhitt |
| Lieutenant-Commander (T) | Eric G. Robinson |
| Lieutenant (G) | Geoffrey S. Arbuthnot |
| Lieutenant (N) | Thomas M. Brounger |
| Lieutenant (S) | Eric W. P. Westmacott |
| Lieutenant | Frederick J. Stringer |
| Engineer Lieutenant-Commander | Leslie Robins |
| Engineer Lieutenant | William A. Bury |
| Assistant Paymaster (Secretary to Commodore T.) | Kenneth E. Badcock |
| Sub-Lieutenant | Rudolph H. E. M. P. de Lisle |

### *AMPHION* (Captain D., 3rd Flotilla)

| | |
|---|---|
| Captain | Cecil H. Fox |
| Lieutenant (G) | John C. Tovey |
| Lieutenant (N) | John W. Clayton |
| Lieutenant | Edward S. F. Fengen |
| Lieutenant | Stanley F. W. Laidlaw |
| Lieutenant R.N.R. | Kinsley G. Howe (acting) |
| Engineer-Commander | Charles G. Ware |
| Engineer-Lieutenant | Howard Wormell |
| Sub-Lieutenant | Maurice A. Brind |
| Staff Paymaster | Joseph T. Gedge |
| Assistant Paymaster | George S. Trewin |
| Signal Boatswain | Robert Alexander |

### *FEARLESS* (Captain D., 1st Flotilla)

| | |
|---|---|
| Captain | William F. Blunt |
| Lieutenant-Commander (G) | Robert P. McHardy |

| | |
|---|---|
| Lieutenant (N) | William S. F. Macleod |
| Lieutenant | Geoffrey C. Cooke |
| Lieutenant | William F. Budgen |
| Engineer-Commander | Charles de F. Messervy |
| Engineer-Lieutenant | George F. Croker |
| Paymaster | James C. Spalding |
| Assistant Paymaster | Guy P. Woollerton |

*ARETHUSA* (Flagship of Commodore T.)

(Commissioned August 11th, 1914)

| | |
|---|---|
| Commodore | Reginald Y. Tyrwhitt |
| Lieutenant-Commander (S) | M. Brock Birkett |
| Lieutenant-Commander | Arthur P. N. Thorowgood |
| Lieutenant (T) | Gordon C. Wilkinson |
| Lieutenant (N) | Bertram C. Watson |
| Lieutenant (G) | Ernest K. Arbuthnot |
| Lieutenant | Arthur R. T. Williams |
| Engineer-Commander | Cecil H. Johnson |
| Engineer-Lieutenant | Arthur H. Tilt |
| Assistant Paymaster (Secretary to Commodore T.) | Kenneth E. Badcock |
| Paymaster | Hugh Miller |

*UNDAUNTED* (Captain D., 3rd Flotilla)

(Commissioned August 29th, 1914)

| | |
|---|---|
| Captain | Cecil H. Fox |
| Lieutenant-Commander | The Rt. Hon. Lord George F. Seymour |
| Lieutenant (N) | Melvill Hensman |
| Lieutenant (G) | Robert C. Woollerton |
| Lieutenant (I) | Claude L. A. Woollard |
| Engineer-Commander | Francis Graham |
| Engineer-Lieutenant | George J. B. Barry |
| Staff Paymaster | Francis R. H. Drake |
| Sub-Lieutenant | Fergus S. Graham |
| Assistant Paymaster | George S. Trewin |
| Signal Boatswain | Robert Alexander |

## *AURORA*

(Commissioned September 5th, 1914)

| | |
|---|---|
| Captain | Alan G. Hotham |
| Lieutenant-Commander | Kenneth B. Toms |
| Lieutenant (G) | Frank G. Fowle |
| Lieutenant (N) | Geoffrey D. O. Earwaker |
| Lieutenant | Geoffrey W. W. Hooper |
| Engineer Lieutenant-Commander | Alfred E. Cock |
| Engineer-Lieutenant | Alfred C. Brook |
| Paymaster | William R. Roe |
| Sub-Lieutenant | Maurice J. Bethell |

## *PENELOPE*

(Commissioned December 10th, 1914)

| | |
|---|---|
| Captain | Hubert Lynes |
| Lieutenant-Commander | James M. Pipon |
| Lieutenant (N) | William H. Gell |
| Lieutenant (G) | Wharton S. Gray |
| Lieutenant | Maximillam C. Despard, M.B. |
| Engineer-Commander | Harry L. Giles |
| Engineer-Lieutenant | Cyril B. Evington |
| Sub-Lieutenant | Theodore F. A. Voysey |
| Staff Paymaster | Reginald F. Brown |

## *CONQUEST*

(Commissioned March 26th, 1915)

| | |
|---|---|
| Captain | James U. Farie |
| Lieutenant-Commander (G) | William R. Phillimore |
| Lieutenant (N) | Claude B. Elbrow |
| Lieutenant | Valentine Searles-Wood |
| Lieutenant R.N.R. | Richard Harrison |
| Lieutenant R.N.R. | John McK. Robertson |
| Engineer-Commander | Frank R. Pendleton |
| Engineer-Lieutenant | Francis Barker |
| Paymaster (acting) | Charles F. Baker |
| Sub-Lieutenant | John A. Bickford-Smith |
| Sub-Lieutenant R.N.R. | Nathaniel G. Burgess |

## *CLEOPATRA*

(Commissioned March 15th, 1915)

| | |
|---|---|
| Captain | Frederick P. Loder-Symonds |
| Lieutenant-Commander (G) | Clinton F. S. Danby |
| Lieutenant (N) | David R. Ritchie |
| Lieutenant | John S. Dove |
| Lieutenant | Hugh R. Eastwood |
| Engineer-Commander | Elias G. Pallot |
| Engineer-Lieutenant | Herbert A. Slade |
| Paymaster (acting) | Norman D. A. Thompson |
| Sub-Lieutenant | Ronald R. Lyle |
| Sub-Lieutenant R.N.R. | David Wilson |
| Sub-Lieutenant R.N.V.R. | Reginald B. Cartwright |

## *CARYSFORT*

(Commissioned May 26th, 1915)

| | |
|---|---|
| Captain | Albert P. Addison |
| Lieutenant-Commander (G) | Oliver M. F. Stokes |
| Lieutenant (N) | Claude A. Merriman |
| Lieutenant | Reginald H. Ransome |
| Lieutenant | Charles J. H. Du Boulay |
| Lieutenant R.N.V.R. | John Harper |
| Engineer-Commander | John C. Pearson |
| Engineer-Lieutenant | Henry J. Lamb |
| Paymaster | Edward C. Child |
| Sub-Lieutenant | Edmund H. N. Harvey |

## *CONCORD*

(Commissioned December, 1916)

| | |
|---|---|
| Captain | William D. Paton |
| Lieutenant-Commander (G) | C. Winthrop Swithinbank |
| Lieutenant-Commander R.N.V.R. (acting) | Gerald G. Grant |
| Lieutenant (N) | William G. Tennant |
| Lieutenant | Eric R. A. Farquharson |
| Lieutenant | Denys P. O'Callaghan |

| | |
|---|---|
| Lieutenant (E) | Louis H. Heath |
| Lieutenant (acting) | George R. H. Smith |
| Lieutenant R.N.R. | William C. Postle |
| Engineer-Commander | Samuel R. Lewis |
| Lieutenant R.M. | John H. Haddon |
| Staff Paymaster | Clarence Teasdale-Buckel |
| Assistant Paymaster R.N.R. | Frederick G. Smith |

## *CANTERBURY*

| | |
|---|---|
| Captain | Percy M. R. Royds |
| Lieutenant-Commander (G) | Cecil C. B. Vacher |
| Lieutenant (N) | Cuthbert Coppinger |
| Lieutenant | Archibald E. de B. Jennings |
| Lieutenant | Nowell C. Johnstone |
| Lieutenant R.N.R. | Harold A. Vivian |
| Engineer-Commander | Cecil Barker |
| Engineer-Lieutenant | John C. Flint |
| Sub-Lieutenant | Cecil C. M. Usher |
| Sub-Lieutenant R.N.V.R. | George R. Curtis |
| Paymaster (acting) | Kenneth S. Carpendale |

## *CENTAUR*

(Commissioned May, 1916)

| | |
|---|---|
| Commodore | Reginald Y. Tyrwhitt, C.B., D.S.O. |
| Secretary | Kenneth E. Badcock |
| Flag Commander (S) | M. Brock Birkett |
| Engineer-Commander | Percy F. Griffiths |
| Clerk to Secretary | H. Guy Pertwee |
| Clerk to Secretary | Harold M. M. Crofton |
| Captain | Barry E. Domvile |
| Lieutenant-Commander (T) | Gordon C. Wilkinson |
| Lieutenant-Commander (N) | Bertram C. Watson |
| Lieutenant-Commander | Randal B. McCowen |
| Lieutenant (G) | Herbert W. Edwards |
| Lieutenant (Emergency) | Griffith W. N. Boynton |
| Lieutenant R.N.V.R. | Edward H. Young, M.P. |
| Engineer-Commander | William S. Torrance |

| | |
|---|---|
| Engineer-Lieutenant | Rey G. Parry, D.S.O. |
| Captain R.M. | Herbert E. Dowding |
| Paymaster | Edward C. Child |
| Sub-Lieutenant | Colin Buist |

## *CURACOA*

| | |
|---|---|
| Captain | Barry E. Domvile, C.M.G. |
| Commander | Randal B. McCowen |
| Commander (G) | Hamilton J. B. Hall |
| Lieutenant-Commander (T) | Gordon C. Wilkinson |
| Lieutenant-Commander (N) | Bertram C. Watson, D.S.O. |
| Lieutenant-Commander (G) | Edward N. Syfret |
| Lieutenant | Colin Buist |
| Lieutenant (Emergency) | Griffith W. N. Boynton |
| Lieutenant R.N.R. | Herbert J. Miller |
| Engineer-Commander | Sidney G. Misselbrook |
| Engineer-Lieutenant | Albert E. Marden |
| Captain R.M. | Herbert E. Dowding |
| Staff Paymaster | Edward C. Child |
| Sub-Lieutenant | John Tennant |
| Assistant Paymaster R.N.R. | David Davies |

## *COVENTRY*

| | |
|---|---|
| Captain | Francis G. St. John |
| Lieutenant-Commander (G) | Christopher J. F. Wood |
| Lieutenant-Commander (N) | Melvill Hensman |
| Lieutenant-Commander | Henry B. Rawlings |
| Lieutenant | James P. A. Bremridge |
| Lieutenant R.N.R. | John F. Prout |
| Lieutenant R.N.V.R. | Kenneth D. Lane |
| Engineer-Commander | Harold S. Morley |
| Engineer-Lieutenant R.C.N. | George P. Clark |
| Lieutenant R.M. | Leslie C. Hollis |
| Staff Paymaster | Geoffrey B. J. Stuart |
| Sub-Lieutenant | Francis J. A. Coleby |
| Sub-Lieutenant (acting) | Robert J. M. Middlemist |
| Assistant Paymaster | Edward G. Palmer |
| Chief Signal Boatswain | Robert Alexander |

# EXPLANATORY NOTES

## Specialist Officers

(G) = Gunnery Officer.
(T) = Torpedo Officer.
(N) = Navigating Officer.
(S) = Signal Officer (Flagship only).
(I) = Interpreter in Languages (one usually borne in each squadron).
(E) = Engineer Officer (New Scheme).

# APPENDIX B

## DESTROYERS ATTACHED TO FIRST FLOTILLA

FIRST DIVISION

*Acheron* . Commander Brien M. Money
*Attack* . Lieutenant-Commander Cyril Callaghan
*Hind* . Lieutenant-Commander Geoffrey Corlett
*Archer* . Lieutenant-Commander Herbert F. Littledale

SECOND DIVISION

*Ariel* . Commander Dashwood F. Moir
*Hydra* . Lieutenant-Commander Robert J. Buchanan
*Hornet* . Commander Cecil G. Chichester
*Tigress* . Lieutenant-Commander Paul Whitfield

THIRD DIVISION

*Ferret* . Commander Geoffrey Mackworth
*Forrester* . Lieutenant-Commander Montague G. B. Legge
*Druid* . Lieutenant-Commander Edmond J. G. MacKinnon
*Defender* . Lieutenant-Commander Walter J. Fletcher

FOURTH DIVISION

*Badger* . Commander Charles A. Freemantle
*Beaver* . Lieutenant-Commander Kenneth A. Beattie
*Jackal* . Lieutenant-Commander John C. Hodgson
*Sandfly* . Lieutenant-Commander Francis G. C. Coates

FIFTH DIVISION

*Goshawk* . Commander The Hon. Herbert Meade
*Lizard* . Lieutenant-Commander Evelyn C. O. Thomson
*Lapwing* . Lieutenant-Commander Alexander H. Gye
*Phoenix* . Lieutenant-Commander Michael K. H. Kennedy

## DESTROYERS OF THIRD FLOTILLA

FIRST DIVISION

*Lance* . Commander Wion de M. Egerton
*Legion* . Lieutenant-Commander Claud F. Allsup

*Lennox* . Lieutenant-Commander Clement R. Dane
*Loyal* . Lieutenant-Commander F. Burges Watson

SECOND DIVISION
*Lark* . Commander Rafe G. Rowley-Conwy
*Landrail* . Lieutenant-Commander Bruce Lloyd Owen
*Lookout* . Commander Arthur B. S. Dutton
*Lydiart* . Lieutenant-Commander Cecil R. Hemans

THIRD DIVISION
*Laforey* . Commander Graham R. L. Edwards
*Lawford* . Lieutenant-Commander Arthur A. Scott
*Louis* . Lieutenant-Commander Richard W. U. Bayly
*Leonidas* . Lieutenant-Commander Reginald W. Grubb

FOURTH DIVISION
*Laurel* . Commander George P. England
*Liberty* . Lieutenant-Commander Reginald B. C. Hutchinson, D.S.C.
*Lysander* . Commander Henry F. H. Wakefield
*Laertes* . Lieutenant-Commander Malcolm L. Goldsmith

UNATTACHED
*Lassoo* . Lieutenant-Commander Vernon S. Butler

## DESTROYERS ATTACHED TO TENTH FLOTILLA

*Moorsom* . Commander John C. Hodgson
*Morris* . Commander Reginald Henniker Heaton
*Termagant* . Lieutenant-Commander Cuthbert P. Blake, D.S.O.
*Turbulent* . Lieutenant-Commander D. Stuart
*Miranda* . Commander Barry E. Domvile
*Meteor* . Lieutenant-Commander Alan F. W. Howard
*Mansfield* . Lieutenant-Commander William H. Sandford
*Matchless* . Lieutenant-Commander Astley D. C. Cooper-Key, D.S.O.
*Mentor* . Lieutenant in Command Henry J. Hartnoll, D.S.O.
*Murray* . Lieutenant in Command Frederick H. G. Dalrymple-Hamilton
*Myngs* . Lieutenant in Command John R. Johnston
*Medusa* . Lieutenant-Commander Cecil R. Hemans

# APPENDIX C

## DESTROYER LEADERS

*Lightfoot* . Commander Colin K. Maclean
*Tipperary* . Captain Charles J. Wintow

## DESTROYERS ATTACHED TO HARWICH SUBMARINE FLOTILLA, IN COMMAND OF COMMODORE ROGER KEYS

*Lurcher* . Commander Wilfred Tomkinson
*Firedrake* . Lieutenant-Commander Alfred B. Watts

## SEAPLANE CARRIERS OPERATING WITH HARWICH FORCE

*Engadine* . Squadron-Commander Cecil J. L'Estrange Malone
*Riviera* . Flight-Commander Edmund D. M. Robertson
*Empress* . Flight-Commander Frederick W. Bowhill
Lieutenant (R.N.R.) George Blaxland
*Vindix* . Lieutenant-Commander Gerald Ducat

# APPENDIX D

## LIST OF CASUALTIES

### Light Cruisers

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. *Amphion* | Mined and sunk | | August 5th, 1914 |
| 2. *Undaunted* | In collision | | March 24th, 1915 |
| 3. *Arethusa* (Flagship of Com. T.) | Mined and sunk | | February 11th, 1916 |
| 4. *Undaunted* | In collision | | March 26th, 1916 |
| 5. *Penelope* | Torpedoed | | April 24th, 1916 |
| 6. *Cleopatra* | Mined | | August 4th, 1916 |
| 7. *Centaur* | Mined | | June 13th, 1918 |
| 8. *Conquest* | Mined | | June 13th, 1918 |

### Destroyers

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. *Landrail* | Collision | March 24th, 1915 |
| 2. *Louis* | Sunk | October 31st, 1915 |
| 3. *Medusa* | Scuttled in North Sea | March 25th, 1916 |
| 4. *Tipperary* | Sunk at Jutland | May 31st, 1916 |
| 5. *Turbulent* | Sunk at Jutland | May 31st, 1916 |
| 6. *Lassoo* | Torpedoed and sunk | August 13th, 1916 |
| 7. *Simoon* | Sunk in action | January 23rd, 1917 |
| 8. *Laforey* | Mined and sunk | March 23rd, 1917 |
| 9. *Setter* | Lost in collision | May 17th, 1917 |
| 10. *Mentor* | Torpedoed | August 7th, 1917 |
| 11. *Recruit* | Mined and sunk | August 9th, 1917 |
| 12. *Surprise* | Mined and sunk | December 23rd, 1917 |
| 13. *Torrent* | Mined and sunk | December 23rd, 1917 |
| 14. *Tornado* | Mined and sunk | December 23rd, 1917 |
| 15. *North Star* | Lost at Zeebrugge | April 23rd, 1918 |
| 16. *Ulleswater* | Torpedoed and sunk | August 15th, 1918 |
| 17. *Scott* | Torpedoed and sunk | August 15th, 1918 |

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